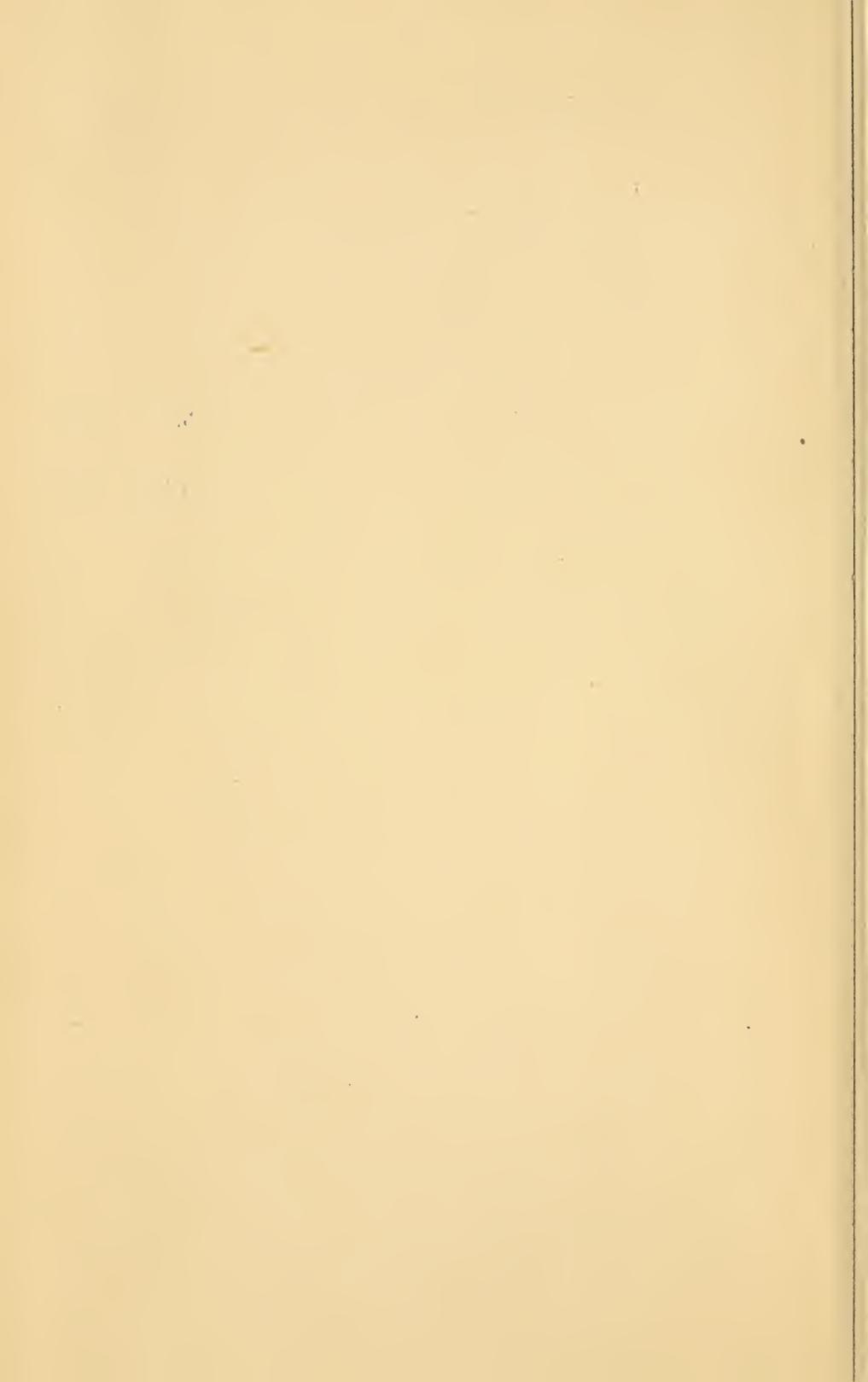




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The Book of Daniel



Scripture Primers

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A COMPOSITE REVELATION OF
THE LAST DAYS OF ISRAEL'S SUB-
JUGATION TO GENTILE POWERS

BY

W. C. STEVENS

*Late Principal Missionary Training Institute, Christian
and Missionary Alliance, Nyack, N. Y.*



REVISED EDITION



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DEDICATION

TO the FIFTEEN HUNDRED MEN
AND WOMEN now representing
all foreign mission fields and home
spheres of Christian service, with
whom he spent many hallowed hours
in searching God's Word while
Principal of the Missionary Institute
at Nyack-on-Hudson, N. Y., this
volume is affectionately dedicated by
the Author.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THIS book was written under the solemn impressions of the first months of the great conflict which is now convulsing the European and, in part already, the Asiatic territory of the imperial world with which Daniel is concerned. May the following pages be helpful under God just at this time, when "latter days" history and progress are being strikingly unfolded.

The author's aim is not to throw light upon Daniel, but to open the windows of ordinary intelligence for the light of Daniel to stream in. The method followed has been thus described by an experienced judge of the subject: "His unfolding of the book is the book's unfolding of itself."

"Scripture Primers" is a modest title for a series of Scriptural writings, not affecting to be commentaries, of which the present volume is the first. This title admits of a construction of the books, internal and external, which is simple and helpful, as well as handy and economical, for general classes of readers.

W. C. STEVENS.

Oakland, Cal., February 6, 1915.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

No small stir has agitated all circles of prophetic students and writers during the last two and one-half years since this volume was first issued. This has been due to the striking character of the great international war which is still raging. This conflict has provoked much prophetic inquiry and has occasioned multiplied ventures into the field of prophetic interpretation.

However, notwithstanding the urgent claims of these, too often variant, interpretations,—based very largely upon the prophecies of Daniel—the author has, after continual prayerful reference to the book of Daniel itself, found no occasion to alter any item of exposition as given in the first edition in preparing this reissue.

This reflects no credit upon the author; but it does emphasize the wisdom of reading the book of Daniel—as also all other Scriptures—in a plain, natural, literary way, without bringing to it any “keys of interpretation,” by which to unlock from the book something else than its self-evident meaning.

While the accelerating progress of prophetic fulfilment thrills the enlightened heart with greatly intensified anticipation, yet the rigid demands of Daniel’s outline of the present age check

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all sensational prognostications of an untimely termination of the same. The awful agonies of the present conflict of the imperial elements have not as yet resulted in jointing to the pedal stage of the time-end of Daniel's outline the final digital stage. It would be a sad omen of worse coming troubles did this struggle not so result at all. But, even if it does, we have only an approximate, not an arithmetical, basis on which to estimate the further duration of the age.

It is true that "The Lord is at hand." But on that very account was the exhortation given, which applies as well today, "Let your moderation be known to all men" (Phil. 4: 5).

One thing is certainly not only "at hand," but on hand; that is the world's crying need of the gospel. "I [Jesus] say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." Never was the whitened state of the world-field—fully ripe with spiritual need—so vividly before every intelligent spiritual eye. And another thing is certainly practically imperative today, which is, "Occupy till I come."

In Matt. 24: 13, 14 two "ends" are spoken of. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The first "end" was the destruction of the Holy City and the Temple of the Jews, in 70 A. D. The other "end" is that which we still await. The entire interval between these terminals was to be occupied with one ever-pressing claim upon the

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Church of Jesus Christ, with one ever-insistent matter for her attention,—to preach “this gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness unto all nations,” or, as Jesus put it in Mark 16: 15, “to every creature.”

These days, the conditions of these days, the signs of these days, all conspire to challenge, to compel, the Church of Christ to herald His everlasting gospel to every nation, to every quarter, to every creature. Is there any real assurance of His coming so long as this is not done? Would it be well for the Church for Him to come and find her far behind in this business? Is she in true readiness for His appearing while delinquent with respect to the immediate, entire evangelization of the world? Without proving obedient to the command: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” can she claim the promise: “Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing”?

W. C. STEVENS.

Biblical College, Boone, Iowa.

Thanksgiving Day, 1917.

INTRODUCTION

FOR twenty years the writer has known the author of this modest volume as a brother in Christ and a valued teacher of the Word of God. Christian workers throughout the world have lighted their torches at his flame, as they sat under his benign teaching in the Missionary Training Institute at Nyack, N. Y. An appreciation of his spirit and his ability makes it an honor to write this introduction to the earliest of his Scriptural Primers.

His choice of the book of Daniel is well-timed, writing as he did under the solemn impressions of the great conflict progressing in the very territory of which Daniel was inspired to speak, the territory of the prophetic earth. And, as if the author himself were touched by the same Spirit to show the application of one of Daniel's prophecies to current events, he asks: "What are the attributes of beasts? To keep their own at any cost within their might; to quarrel over what they do not have but what they want; to fly easily into blood-thirsty rage at any affront; . . . under passion, to take utmost satisfaction in the blood, the agonies, the loss, the death of the objects of their rage; . . . God foresaw this spirit prevalent in the world-empires down to the end. . . . And militarism is its indispensable implement."

INTRODUCTION

The reader will recognize in this single extract the up-to-date-ness of this work, and appreciate the skill which is able to bring the Bible and the last event of history together.

Scarcely any two expositors of Daniel may expect to see eye to eye in every detail of its interpretation, which makes it the more interesting to the writer that Mr. Stevens should regard "the man of sin" as likely to arise in Greece, since for years the writer's own conviction has been in that direction. If he be not a Grecian prince, is it not at least from that portion of the Roman Empire which formerly was the kingdom of Greece that we are to look for "this great destroyer of God's Israel to appear?"

Did space permit, it would be worth while to speak of the natural method of study illustrated in this book, in obedience to which the author to so great an extent permits the text to be its own interpreter, a merit all too rare in commentaries. The best Bible teacher is he who lets God do the most teaching through his lips, or by his pen, and Mr. Stevens has the wisdom to perceive and act upon this principle.

May God add His blessing to the book which seems to have "come to the kingdom for such a time as this," for as its writer says: "In the light of all the revelations of Daniel thus far, we feel strongly impressed that we are in the transition from 'latter days' to 'last days.' "

—JAMES M. GRAY.

The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

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I

INTRODUCTORY: DANIEL CHOSEN OF GOD AND OF THE KING

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

BEGINNING OF JUDAH'S DOWNFALL AND OF THE SEVENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY.—Borrowing from secular chronology the well-known date of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, 587 b. c., and reckoning backward in the line of Judah's last kings as given in 2 Chron. 36, we find that "the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah" was 606 b. c. According to 2 Kings 24: 1-4, it was because of Jehoiakim's extreme ungodliness, as well as in remembrance of the wickedness of earlier kings of Judah, especially Manasseh, that God began, with this invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the long-threatened overthrow of the kingdom. This partial captivity was really the beginning of the "Seventy Years' Captivity" of the Jews in Babylon. That Nebuchadnezzar had everything at his mercy is evi-

dent from the statement of 2 Chron. 36: 6, that "he bound him [Jehoiakim] in fetters, to carry him to Babylon." But he released him from fetters and replaced him on his throne; only, however, under the condition of servitude to himself (2 Kings 24: 1). The first stage of the downfall of Judah, then, was the degradation of the kingdom to a state of servitude to Babylon, with only a partial and special captivity at the first. The Jews have never since recovered their independence as a kingdom, as at this same time began the yet unexpired "Times of the Gentiles," meaning thereby the times of Gentile rule over God's chosen nation, Israel.

After three years Jehoiakim rebelled against God's will in his subjection to Nebuchadnezzar, and he thereby brought the nation under increasing calamities (2 Kings 24: 2). During his remaining five years he was provoking Nebuchadnezzar to a new and more destructive invasion of Judah. Jehoiakim, however, died in disgrace (Jer. 22: 17, 19) before the invader arrived, and the next king, Jehoiachin, after reigning wickedly but one hundred days, was taken captive, together with all his family, the queen mother and the best part of the people and of the treasures of temple and palace (2 Kings 24: 8-16). This is commonly called "The Captivity," both because of its magnitude and also because it contained the seed of the future restoration; the remnant left behind was reserved for destruction or irrecoverable dispersion, when after eleven more years, covering

the reign of the last king, Zedekiah,—years of fully ripened rebellion and corruption—Nebuchadnezzar was once more sent by God to finish the work of judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem. Read Jer. 24.

3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; 4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skillful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. 6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

DANIEL'S DEPORTATION TO BABYLON.—Daniel was included in that first captivity, which, it seems, was in Nebuchadnezzar's mind a matter of adding valuable material to the empire rather than of merely dragging prisoners of war into captivity. Besides taking his choice "of the vessels of God's house," he had promising young men selected from the royal household, the nobility and the populace, for training for court service at Babylon. Among these were Daniel and his three special companions.

The above description of the gifts and acquisitions required in these youths would warrant our setting the age of Daniel approximately at nineteen. This would locate his birth at 625 B. C., which date also marked the birth of the Babylonian Empire, with which Daniel was destined to be so remarkably associated throughout its history. It was Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, who broke the power of ancient Nineveh, the capital of the hoary Assyrian Empire; and Nebuchadnezzar, as heir-apparent to the new world-empire, seems to have become already a great conqueror. His accession to the throne upon his father's death was, according to Jer. 25: 1, one year after his first capture of Jerusalem, namely, "In the fourth year of Jehoiakim," 605 B. C. Thus God was preparing His chosen instrument of judicial dealing with His erring people, while at the same time He was preparing in the person of Daniel His own representative and prophet, to stand in his people's behalf before the mighty monarch.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

DANIEL'S GREAT MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DECISION.—We cannot believe that Daniel was a purposeless young man when he passed through the gates of the new, ambitious capital of the world. A very interesting and profitable study

may be made right here into the circumstances of Daniel's earlier years, in order to form an approximate idea of the process through which this rare character was developed for so high a destiny.

We cannot doubt that so intelligent, observant and favored a youth had taken a keen and profitable interest in the momentous events which, as we have noted, were in progress in the course of Gentile empire. But, of far stronger influence upon him would be the stirring contemporaneous events in the history of his native land. From verse 3 we may infer that he was a child of the royal house or of the highest nobility, and that, therefore, he had been reared in close touch with the highest personages of the nation. First among these stood the good king Josiah.

Assuming that Daniel was nineteen when taken to Babylon "in the third year of Jehoiakim," this would carry his birth back to the fifteenth year of Josiah's reign of thirty-one years (2 Chron. 34: 1). Next, perhaps, to David himself, Josiah was dearer to the heart of God and of the people than any other king. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left" (vs. 2). At sixteen years of age "he began to seek after the God of David his father" (vs. 3). For four years he so grew in the knowledge of God and in holy zeal, that, being then but twenty years of age, he set resolutely about the task of extirpating the extreme system of idolatry which his predecessors,

Manasseh and Amon, had, during fifty-seven years of shameless rule, established and perpetuated throughout the land. This occupied him for six years. "And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem" (vs. 7). Daniel would then have been old enough to catch the inspiration of this holy achievement.

Immediately after, Josiah took up vigorously the task of renovating the neglected temple, which was full of rubbish and sadly out of repair (vss. 8-13). There turned up amidst the rubbish a copy of the law of Moses. Manasseh had evidently taken pains to wipe out even the written law from the land. How remarkable that Josiah could have gained such intimate acquaintance with God and such holy, intelligent zeal without a copy of the Scriptures to aid him! The discovery of this copy of the law led, upon its being read before the king, to the utmost apprehension of the extreme judgment of God, and to the most anxious appeal to God for mercy. Mercy was promised for Josiah's remaining days (vss. 14-28). Thereupon Josiah had the nation assembled to hear the law, and he swore all to the most faithful observance of the same (vss. 29-33).

It is to be noted that, from the first year after Josiah commenced all these public reforms, he had had the association and assistance of Jeremiah, who, according to Jer. 1: 2, was called just

at this juncture and almost as a youth to his great prophetic office. His was the task of the internal, spiritual reform; while Josiah's was that of the external, conventional reform. Josiah's work as recorded in the historical books was an inspiring success; but Jeremiah's work was to tear away the mask from the hollow-hearted reformation of the people.

Josiah's epoch of reform was crowned with a most glorious passover (35: 1-19). "And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet: neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept" (vs. 18).

We can see that, under such leaders of affairs in Judah and under such influences, critical and stirring, Daniel's young heart must have received an unusual molding for good. Back of all there lay, most likely, a godly parental care, which utilized and supplemented these circumstances for the best ends.

But we are called now to note particularly the change of conditions affecting Daniel's training of character which occurred when he was supposedly sixteen years of age. At that time a tragedy hitherto unparalleled befell Judah in the untimely death of Josiah while in the prime of life and success. This occurred in consequence of what was apparently the one only misstep of his life, namely, his misguided and foolish interference with Egypt's attempt to gain supremacy over the decaying power of Assyria. The sad story and

its profound effect is told in 2 Chron. 35: 20-25.

After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sorely wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.

The impressionable heart of the lad Daniel must have been affected profoundly and indelibly by this whole affair. Yet, all the more critical must have been this period of his life, because of the sudden and extreme contrast now introduced into his political and moral surroundings and influences. The son of Josiah, Jehoahaz (also called Shallum in Jer. 22:11, 12) took not up his father's mantle, but that of his wicked predecessors; and after a reign of only three months he

was taken away captive for the rest of his life by the Egyptian king, Pharaoh-Necho, on his return from his defeat in the East (2 Kings 23: 31-34). Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, then took up the reins of government; but, as we have seen, only to undo as rapidly as possible all the good which Josiah had accomplished. Now that the kingdom was reeling along dizzily in abandoned wickedness, wanton idolatry and reckless violation of political obligations, every worldly inducement to a prince in the morning of life would urge Daniel to forsake the memories of Josiah, spurn the relentless jeremiads of the prophet, and conform to the morals and politics of the day. These very conditions, however, impelled a soul like Daniel's to root itself in the deepest fastnesses of the national faith. He girded himself to withstand, rather than to drift with, the current of his times.

With some such previous moral training, Daniel met the supreme demand upon his personal decision which was occasioned by the new and testing surroundings and temptations of the imperial court at the capital, not only of Gentile power, but also of heathen idolatry. Daniel had to decide, at the risk alike of forfeiting the most dazzling earthly prospects and of provoking the murderous wrath of the irresponsible young autocrat, that he would not be of Babylon although in it; that he would be as out and out for God in Babylon as in Jerusalem; that, while politically under the feet of Babylon, yet morally and spiritually he would

put Babylon under his feet. This decision founded him deep down upon the Rock, Christ Jesus; and on this Rock God built that unique character and career, which serves as a pattern for every Christian who has to live in a world yet lying in the evil one.

It is worthy of notice, how unflinching decision perfectly blended with refined courtesy in Daniel, in that he pursued his purpose, not to defile himself with the king's meat and drink, not by abruptly repulsing the prince of the eunuchs, but by requesting to be allowed another diet (vs. 8).

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. 11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. 16 Then Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

DANIEL'S DIET IN RELATION TO HIS CAREER.
—While the rejection of these articles was not

primarily a matter of abstinence or of dietary consideration, and while even the "pulse" was doubtless served as a dish "fit for a king," yet on physical grounds this decision was after the Lord's way of eating, in its bearing upon a great career. "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" (Ecc. 10: 16, 17). Liquor makes drunk its thousands; intemperate eating its tens of thousands. The one blights many promising careers, the other ten-fold more, especially among God's children. As food is amazingly potential for strength of body and mind, so is it also for the exhaustion of both when unduly taken. But food-drunkenness does not end with depression of body and mind; it alarmingly weakens moral and spiritual strength. Not only is an inordinate appetite to be conquered; an orderly diet is also necessary to such longevity and unfailing ability as find illustration in Daniel's career.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found

them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

CHOSEN AND PREPARED OF GOD TO STAND BEFORE KINGS.—Daniel and his companions illustrate to us the great truth that, for our present dual life—in both the natural and the supernatural, in the earthlies as well as the heavenlies—we are to combine the best of heavenly grace with the highest of earthly acquisition. “God gave them knowledge and skill,” verse 17. Here is a stream of grace from above. Enough in itself, we would at first say, with which to turn the world upside down. Perhaps so! But our work is to turn the world right side up. And, while we are to do this by divine will and power, and not by human, yet equally are we to do it by natural instrumentality. Hence, our quotation needs to be completed: “God gave them knowledge and skill *in all learning and wisdom.*” Here was something of practical value to Nebuchadnezzar, through which the power of God could reach and shake his heart and his throne; just as Carey in India, Griffith John in China, Underwood in Korea, Hamlin in Turkey, and other men of decision of character and of divinely blest scientific knowledge, have served in modern heathen countries. Certain men of God are today being the real agents of upheaval in all the great oriental nations, and they are being treated by progressive heathen rulers as “ten times better” than all the

wise men of their realms. But it is their natural desirability to these monarchs which opens their way to where God wants them.

Daniel, however, had added to him other and purely supernatural gifts, which qualified him to be God's agent in some ways entirely beyond his equally faithful and honorable companions: "And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (vs. 17).

After three years of tuition in the language and lore of the Chaldeans, Daniel, with his three companions, was presented at court for a thorough examination of his qualifications for court service. These Hebrews were found to be very far superior to all other candidates. The result for Daniel was a long ministry at the king's court. Not only did he serve as Nebuchadnezzar's prime minister throughout his long reign of forty-four years, but he succeeded himself under the rest of the Babylonian monarchs; and he was still retained as the most respected and trusted minister under the succeeding Medo-Persian Empire. As verse 21 says, "And Daniel continued [in imperial service] even unto the first year of Cyrus." This is intended to show us that Daniel's official career spanned the entire seventy years of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, for it was in the first year of Cyrus the Persian that the exiles were released. Probably Daniel's last great achievement at court was to negotiate with Cyrus the decree of liberation for the Jews. Doubtless he brought effectively to the knowledge of Cyrus what God had foreshown concerning him nearly

two centuries before by the prophet (Isaiah 44: 28 —45: 6):

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue all nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

Daniel must also have shown him the prophecies of Jeremiah, which fixed a definite time for the termination of the Babylonian captivity, which time matured in 536 B. C., the first year of Cyrus. See Jer. 25:8-14; also 26:10, which reads: "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." The result of these prophetic instructions from Daniel is expressed by Cyrus himself in issuing his decree (2 Chron. 36: 22, 23):

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him and let him go up.

The introductory chapter of Daniel, under the side-lights of related Scriptures, has served so to acquaint us with this prophet, with the influences which molded his character, with his times, and with the setting and opportunity of his career, as to prepare us the more intelligently and expectantly for the marvellous records and revelations to follow in his book.

II

DREAM OF THE GREAT IMAGE

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

THE DATE.—Again the writer gives definite chronological setting to the new matter which he takes in hand. We have already learned that Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne in 605 B. C., the year after Daniel's exile. This chapter seems clearly to indicate that Daniel had already been presented at court. As this could not have been before 603 B. C., after three years of training, we must carry the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign over into 603 B. C. for the time of this incident.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. 6 But if ye shew the

dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain time, because ye see the thing has gone from me. 9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. 10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, or ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

THE PERIL OF DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS.

—Every detail of this diabolical plot, culminating in the naturally inextricable death-trap of the four Hebrews, was essential to the perfect channel of God's marvellous purpose.

14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his

house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then was the secret revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his; 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the night dwelleth with him. 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

THE SUBLIME ASPECT OF DANIEL'S VISION OF THE DREAM.—In returning full-hearted thanks unto God, for answering the four Hebrews' appeal for mercy in granting them personal deliverance from this peril to their lives, Daniel forgets personal temporal interest in glorification of God for the wonders of the revelation itself. In verses 20-22 he foreshadows to us the bearings of the revelation which is to be later recited. He ascribes to God supreme "wisdom and might," and he declares that "He knoweth what is in the darkness" of man's foresight and "giveth wisdom . . . and knowledge" to man in his ignorance. Daniel makes particular application of this principle to the matter of the dream in observing, "He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth

kings and setteth up kings." This clearly indicates that, through this dream of Nebuchadnezzar, there was to be given a disclosure from God's exclusive fore-knowledge and fore-ordination of vast political mutations to come in the earth.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went in and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew the king the interpretation. 25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. 26 The king answered and said unto Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king. 28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, in the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; 29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

THE FOCUS OF THE REVELATION.—In verses 28-30, Daniel informs the king in advance, that the only God in the heavens who can reveal the secrets of the future was by this dream making

"known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (vs. 28), "what should come to pass hereafter," "what shall come to pass" (vs. 29). Thus the thing is focused with great emphasis upon some future consummation, and that, "in the latter days."

We should right here get the standpoint from which these "latter days" are to be viewed. It certainly is not straining in the least to note that the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign marked most important political re-adjustments in the earth. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem the first time, "in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah," he not only introduced the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon, but he also introduced the long, not yet ended, subjection of God's chosen kingdom to Gentile supremacy. As those days of the dreamer were the early days of "The Times of the Gentiles," so it needs to be perceived that the dream was given to make known to him, and to all successors, what should occur "in the latter days" of the times of the Gentiles. In the dream and its interpretation, then, we must keep our attention riveted upon the same focus.

31 Thou, O king, sawest, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which

smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff upon the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

THE DREAM RECLAIMED TO THE KING.—The clue to the import of the revelation having already been given to the king, we cannot fail to follow the progress in Daniel's recital of the dream to the focus upon which the king's mind must have been riveted; and there our gaze should also be focused.

Daniel unveils the image in successive sections from the head to the feet. Inasmuch as "the stone," which demolishes the image, smites it at "his feet," it is plain that these feet belong to "the latter days" already held up to focal view. It is also clear, that the emphasis placed upon the fact that the iron of the legs was mingled with clay in the feet and in the toes shows that this combination of radically dissimilar and uncommingling political elements is to be the sign of the "latter days." Finally, the climax of the dream clearly consists of what the stone does to the image and of what the stone becomes: it utterly obliterates the whole form and substance of the image, and it becomes itself a great mountain filling the whole earth.

Inasmuch as Nebuchadnezzar already understood that the dream related to some great political crisis far down in the stream of time, it seems reasonable to suppose that the dream, as recited by

Daniel and yet uninterpreted, must have impressed him that a time was coming when the order of earthly dominion, with which he was familiar and intoxicated, was to be utterly abolished, and to be supplanted by one of entirely different character—of supernatural and superhuman origin, progress and prevalence.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass,

the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM OF THE GREAT IMAGE.—The first salient feature of the interpretation consists of the representation that the image portrayed a succession of four empires, of which Nebuchadnezzar's was the first. From present historical position the names of the others are familiar: the Medo-Persian, which succeeded the Babylonian in 538 B. C.; the Grecian, which succeeded the Medo-Persian in 330 B. C.; and the Roman, which succeeded the Grecian in 63 B. C.

The next striking feature is the deterioration at each transition in quality and in cohesion. Deterioration in governmental quality is indicated by the succession of silver to gold, brass to silver, iron to brass. Deterioration in cohesion is indicated by the dual breast and arms, representing the dual empire of the Medes and the Persians, (the four-fold division of the Grecian Empire is not represented in the image) and by the marked partition of the two legs.

But both these characteristics of deterioration become most exaggerated in the last stages of the fourth empire, represented by the feet and the toes. And here again it is evident that these feet and toes constitute the “latter days” of the history covered by the image. Upon these days attention is now especially riveted, for the description and the interpretation now become detailed and extended.

Two-fold partition in the legs and feet becomes ten-fold division in the toes. The compactness and the strength of absolute monarchy are sadly lost here. But, not only has gold become replaced by iron in governmental quality, but now, in the feet and toes—i. e., in “the latter days,” yea, in the very last days of this span of Gentile rule—iron has to share with clay in the governmental constituency. Here is the stupendous weight of imperial government resting upon a base, partly of strong, and partly of fragile, composition. It represents government in the imperial world come to its most uncertain, destructible condition. What does it signify?

The answer to this question is given by the interpretation. “They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men,” verse 43. This clearly means that, in the times of the feet and the toes, an unprecedented feature of government in the old imperial world will prevail,—that of the combination in government of the kings with the populace. It is the picture of limited, constitutional, parliamentary monarchy. It is a mingling, but not a commingling. “They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay” (vs. 43).

We are at once startled with the evidence that, historically, we are already far along in the times of the feet. For constitutional monarchy may be said to be already about a century old in Europe. Not throughout the entire image-territory did this condition come in simultaneously. It has not

reached an even balance in all the nations concerned yet. But, (writing in the midst of the great European grapple) it is being commonly said that this means the final doom of the pretension of the divine right of kings. It is also being often claimed that not far ahead is coming the complete triumph of the populace in these countries. We can assuredly say, on the strength of this Scripture, that that will never be the case. This irreconcilable combination is to continue till the Gentile Empire perishes.

It has just been said that we live in the “latter days” of the feet of the image. Not yet are we in the “last days” of the toes. This very titanic international upheaval seems likely to prove to be the time of the articulation of the feet and the toes, resulting in the re-mapping of the territory covered by the image, the formation of the last ten-fold partition.

And what will that mean? After dwelling so explicitly and emphatically upon this peculiarity of the “latter days” of the Gentile times,—namely, the dual, conflicting, non-confluent admixture of monarchy and democracy in government—and after especially dwelling upon the times of the ten-fold division of the imperial territory, the interpretation immediately proceeds to its climax in the words, “And in the days of these [ten] kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms,

and it shall stand forever" (vs. 44). It is with awe that we perceive, then, that today we may be confronting the last, brief stage of the Times of the Gentiles, to be terminated by the arrival of God's King from heaven.

As a vital part of the interpretation, particular notice will now be given to the significance of the expression, "the stone." This most conclusively points to Christ as the Messianic King of the Jews, as several Old Testament passages will prove. "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner" (Ps. 118: 22). "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isaiah 28: 16). Still more striking is an expression in Jacob's dying prophecy, where he is speaking of the descendants of Joseph "in the last days": "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the shepherd, THE STONE OF ISRAEL)" (Gen. 49: 24).

God founded the nation of Israel upon the theocratic principle of government: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom" (Ex. 19: 6). God established His royal pavilion in their midst and prescribed detailed regulations for their happy and prosperous intercourse with Him as their ever-present, all-glorious, sanctifying and preserving Guardian and Ruler. When they tired of this symbolical manifestation of theocratic govern-

ment and demanded the establishment of a visible monarchy like the other nations, God deigned to grant their request; but only on condition of holding their kings accountable to Him and as types of the Son of God, who was their unseen King and who should in time appear as their divine-human Ruler. But, after enduring for centuries the rebellions and idolatries of the kings and of the people, God suspended theocratic government, excepting in the mongrel form of using Gentile rulers over His Israel. These were—by such a prophet as Daniel and by such a book as he has left behind—to be kept mindful that they ruled over Israel only by God's decree and until the time appointed for restoring theocracy direct to Israel.

WE SHOULD NOTE WELL, that with this dream as interpreted begins the one great theme of the book of Daniel,—THE SUPERSEDING OF THE “TIMES OF THE GENTILES” AS RULERS OF THE EARTH BY A KINGDOM WHICH IS TO BE SET UP IN THE EARTH BY THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND WHICH IS TO BE EVERLASTING AND UNIVERSAL. But we are to remember, that the point of time from which “the latter days” were being viewed was that of the first days of Israel's subjection to Gentile rule. Hence the pivotal point in the great transition just mentioned is THE RESTORATION OF THEOCRACY TO ISRAEL. It is of utmost importance for a complete understanding of the book of Daniel, to hold in mind from the first that all the revelations of the book proceed from the stand-

point of the early days of Gentile supremacy over Israel; and that they all converge upon the common terminal point of the last days of Gentile supremacy over Israel,—the time when she shall pass from subjection into pre-eminence as the people and channel of God's kingdom in the earth.

In this light, then, let us review the interpretation. The translation of the great Hebrew scholar, Isaac Leeser, gives greater vividness and distinctiveness to important points. "Thou didst look on till the moment that a stone tore itself loose, not through [human] hands, and it struck the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and ground them to pieces" (vs. 34). This vividly pictures a manner of earthly rule progressing historically until, in a moment, an unlike power tears itself loose supernaturally from a foreign place to destroy utterly this whole type of rule. "And the stone that had stricken the image became a mighty mountain, and filled the whole earth" (vs. 35). The figure of a stone's growing into a mountain is perfectly consistent. Its filling the "whole earth," however, brings forward the symbolical meaning of the term "mountain," which is a very common figure in Scripture and in ancient conception for ruling power. The expression here, then, indicates the entrance into the earth, in place of accustomed forms of government, of a rule which, while comparatively limited to begin with, becomes universal in the earth. "But in the days of these kings will the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall not be transferred to any

other people [than whom? Answer, Israel]: but it will grind up and make an end of all these kingdoms, while it will itself endure forever. Whereas thou sawest that out of the mountain [of the heavenly and eternal kingdom] a stone tore itself loose, not through [human] hands, and that it ground up the iron, the copper, the clay, the silver, and the gold: the great God hath made known to the king what is to come to pass after this" (what? Answer, this existing course of Gentile rule over Israel).

How vividly is pictured to our minds the sudden arrival, in jealous and indignant haste, of the Shepherd of Israel: to snatch from the Gentile devourer the little penitent remnant; to obliterate forever from the earth the powers which have so long delighted in tearing the flock; to make this flock His own particular kingdom in the earth; and, as King of the Jews, to fill the earth with His own dominion as the King of kings and Lord of lords!

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

THE PRACTICAL EFFECT UPON NEBUCHADNEZZAR.—These final verses indicate that God's object in disclosing to Nebuchadnezzar this stupendous drama of the last days was, not so much merely to give him the information, as to bring him, as the first of the monarchs of the Times of the Gentiles, to know and to acknowledge his place in relation to Israel's God and to God's Israel. Here is, wittingly or not, a trinitarian acknowledgement of God: as supreme God, as supreme King, and as the omniscient Revealer (vs. 47). How strikingly this corresponds to the actual Trinity: God Almighty, the Father; the Son of God, "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6: 15); and the Holy Spirit, who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," which "things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" and "which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2: 10-12). But this acknowledgment was to the triune God as Daniel's, as Israel's, God. "Of a truth it is, that your God" is such, the king says. Accordingly, the only consistent thing was to give this God's servants the places in honor and in usefulness in the Gentile Empire which He wished them to occupy.

We already see, then, what the book of Daniel means, not only to Israel and to the Church, as a revelation of the coming restoration of Israel to the kingdom in the earth, but also to all rulers of Gentile times, as a revelation of their accountability to God and of their obligations to God with

reference to Israel. Surveying the history of the imperial world of the East from Nebuchadnezzar to the present day, we can clearly see what judgment awaits the nations when "The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" shall come. How important is the book of Daniel as a manual of statesmanship for these as well as for past days, and as "a testimony unto kings" in the hands of every ambassador of Jesus Christ! How pitiful and fatal it is, that the book of Daniel is practically unknown to rulers and statesmen, just because it is practically a sealed or inconsequential book to the ambassadors of Jesus Christ in the earth today!

III

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE OF GOLD

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

THE IMAGE.—The proportions of this structure show that it was in the shape of a man 90 or 110 feet high by 9 or 11 feet broad, according to whether we take the cubit of 18 or that of 22 inches. The purpose of such a colossal statue was evidently to enable a vast concourse of people to behold and worship it simultaneously. To this end it was erected in an open plain. As an “image,” it was not intended to serve as a mere creation of art, but to represent some person. Its composition of gold (Quite likely it was constructed of wood within and overlaid with gold) suggests that it was an image of Nebuchadnezzar himself, made in recollection of Daniel’s words: “Thou art that head of gold” (2: 37). It may, however, have been an image of Nebuchadnezzar’s favorite god, Merodach, “the lord of battles.” We are reminded of another great image, which is to be made for enforced worship in the last days (Rev. 13: 14, 15). Nebuchadnezzar may be considered as playing the role of a type of the coming Antichrist.

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye shall fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. 6 And whoso fall-eth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

DEDICATION OF THE IMAGE.—It is to be noticed that this is not a directly popular, but an exclusively official, dedication and worship of the image. And yet it appears from the sequel that the official line was drawn in a way not to include Daniel, while it included his three friends who had been set “over the affairs of the province of Babylon” (2: 49). The object apparently was to create a uniform, compulsory official religious acknowledgment for the whole Empire. Although an evident imperial advantage, yet this was an act of absolute legal intolerance in matters of reli-

gious conscience. Enforcing by physical and capital penalty carried religion no further than compulsory conformity.

8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. 10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

THE THREE HEBREW PROTESTANTS.—Most conspicuous must have been the act of non-conformity on the part of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were immediately accused before the autocrat of all the world on three well-put charges: 1. "These men have not regarded thee, O King." 2. "They serve not thy gods," or, as Leeser puts it, "Thy god they do not worship." 3. "Nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"; or, to quote from Leeser again, "and to the golden image which thou hast set up they do not bow themselves." Here is implied personal contempt toward the king, flagrant dissent in worship, and official rebellion in the matter of the image.

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.—The three Hebrew non-conformists are summarily haled before the furious monarch and called in question as to the meaning of their act. It is proposed, however, to have the ceremony of homage repeated, in order to give the dissenters opportunity to conform, or, otherwise, to be condemned to the burning fiery furnace. The king now touches the vital point of the issue between himself and these brave subjects: “And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

This defiant challenge opens the whole matter wonderfully to us. Nebuchadnezzar well knew what God he was defying, and he was kicking against the pricks. When his dream of the great image was interpreted by Daniel, the king acknowledged the God of Daniel and of the Jews to

be the supreme God. On the present occasion he is challenging that God to dispute his power over the bodies of these faithful believers. How can we account for so radical a change on Nebuchadnezzar's part?

Not, probably, wholly on the ground of the natural relapse of an unregenerate heathen heart. It is legitimate to assume that, since that former occasion in 603 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem the second time (in 598 B. C.), and had taken away the great "Captivity of Jehoiachin," including many precious vessels from the temple of Jehovah; furthermore, that he had the third time come against the city of Jehovah, destroyed it, rifled and consumed to ashes the house of Jehovah itself, as he did in 587 B. C., and left the Holy Land in desolation.

Remember that ancient conquerors believed that their victories represented the triumph of their own gods over the gods of their vanquished foes. To Nebuchadnezzar it would be conclusive, that his final destruction of Jehovah's earthly kingdom, beautiful city and holy temple, meant that Jehovah was not the supreme divinity, but that his own Merodach—his "Lord of Battles"—was Jehovah's superior, yea, the superior of all divinities, the one supreme god. And the image probably meant that Nebuchadnezzar considered himself, as the earthly son and favorite of this supreme god, entitled to all earthly homage. Hence, the refusal of these Hebrews infuriated the king's self-deifying pride.

This occasion may be set, then, at about twenty years after the former one. In those years Nebuchadnezzar had, by his continuous victories, apparently proved himself mighty through his own god against every other god, even the One whom he had twenty years before felt compelled to acknowledge as unequalled.

The challenge of this son of Merodach is accepted by the sons of Jehovah. What else could the children of God do? Alas, how often, however, professing children of God and followers of Jesus Christ bow to much less formidable religious challenges and dictates of this world and its god! It is noteworthy, that, while the Hebrews believe fully in the possibility of miraculous deliverance by their God, yet they do not make that a condition of their refusal to compromise His name. This is the spirit of all true martyrdom. None of us will ever win "the crown of life," excepting "we love not our lives unto the death," excepting we are committed to be "faithful unto death"; which does not mean until we die a natural death, but unto the extreme of suffering death for our fidelity.

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed upon them.

QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF FIRE.—“Upon whose bodies the fire had no power.” Their bands only were burned from them. Even the king's eye was riveted upon that “form of the fourth” “walking in the midst of the fire” with the valiant three. His presence was the secret of their unharmed condition. How forcibly are we reminded of “The Burning Bush”: “Behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Ex. 3: 2). This represented to Moses the indestructibility of Israel in Egyptian bondage because of God's preserving presence. And Isaiah had given God's promise of Israel's inde-

structibility during this very Babylonian Captivity: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (43: 2). And this accounts for the imperishability of this people to this day. And God promised through Zechariah this indestructibility of the final remnant of Israel in the last days: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (13: 9). This last ordeal of fire will forever consume away all their dross.

There is further force in Nebuchadnezzar's words, "And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (vs. 25). Poor, puny, impotent man! How was he taken in the very act of exalting himself as the son of the highest divinity! How was he humbled to the level of trembling mortal clay by the sight of the true Son of God, and by the proof of His puissance in rendering the most destructive element harmless to His loyal followers!

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION FOR ISRAEL.—Just as the close of the previous chapter—reciting the effect produced upon the king as shown in his acknowledging Israel's Jehovah as supreme God—disclosed the supreme design of God in giving the dream, so here again: these last verses of the chapter reveal that the miracle was intended, not only as a deliverance, or as a wonder in the king's sight, but that its supreme object was to extract from him on substantial grounds this decree of religious toleration for captive and dispersed Israel. The king's acknowledgment that there was no god like their God is not the main point now, but it is taken as the ground for a decree of absolute freedom for the Jews to worship Him without molestation or discrimination anywhere in the wide Empire. And this was not intended by God to be a temporary attitude of the Gentile powers, but as the attitude to be observed by all rulers toward the Israelites in their lands throughout the entire "Times of the Gentiles." According to this early requisition of Jehovah, then, all succeeding rulers shall be judged concerning their treatment of the Jews in respect to their liberty and dignity as worshippers of God. Even though Jewish worship long ago became a mere shell, and although God has long been punishing the Jews with bitter religious persecutions, yet, when the judgment comes, He will requite their persecutors and their scorners according to their despite toward them as the people of God's choice.

IV

DREAM OF THE GREAT TREE

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. 3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

A NOTABLE TESTIMONY.—How impressive is the fact, that this whole long chapter of the book of Daniel is contributed, word for word, by the first and greatest monarch of the Times of the Gentiles, as his personal, loving testimony to the glory and honor of our Christ, for the dealings by which He brought this proudest of autocrats to surrender fully and finally to him! How loyally this monarch takes advantage of his unparalleled position of authority and dominion to give the widest and most effective possible publicity to his undisguised adoration of the Most High! Herein is given a most worthy example to every truly believing ruler until the Son of God comes in His kingdom.

4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore made I a decree to bring all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they

might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. 8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and before him I told the dream, saying, 9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

THE QUALIFIED INTERPRETER.—“There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32: 8). There is, no doubt, intercourse with the upper and unseen world. Communications from there, however, are not necessarily to be relied upon as from God. Spiritism has its messages for those who “seek unto them that have familiar spirits”; but, “should not a people seek unto their God?” (Is. 8: 19.) One thing is certain: no one, who has not the confidence and favor of God, can obtain or steal the secrets of the Almighty. A Balaam may be whipped into God’s service as his messenger. But it remains a blessed fact, that children of God can find out from direct sources every secret which it is right for them to have and every secret which they need to have. It is also true, that, if we will only take due precaution, Satan’s confidants cannot palm off his communications upon us as God’s. While it is not to be inferred that every believer may have Daniel’s gift of inter-

pretation, yet it is Scriptural to expect the Lord to provide this gift among His people "to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12: 7). God has His plans now as He had then, in matters small as well as great, and He has ample resources laid up for all occasions. Yet, no doubt, much of this provision fails to be brought to light by His appointed instruments for the benefit of His people and of the world.

Few are willing to be used to communicate publicly and without hesitancy the secrets of God, which He would entrust to them for His people and even for the world. While New Testament "prophesying serveth" mainly, even as Old Testament prophesying also did, for "edification, and exhortation, and comfort," yet it also embraces the service of "revelation" (1 Cor. 14: 26). We are not left to expect further prophetical predictions since the canon of Scripture was closed; but there is still left great room for and need of divine revelation and interpretation akin to that found in this chapter of Daniel.

10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. 11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. 12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. 13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven; 14 He cried aloud, and said thus,

Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: 15 Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: 16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. 17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. 18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

THE KING'S DREAM.—This dream almost fully explains itself; for it is as a dissolving view, the symbol passing into the reality. But the application of it remained a mystery to the king. In the latter part of verse 15 and in verse 16 the impersonal symbol dissolves into a personal and literal representation, namely, that of some great one represented by the tree, who was to be transformed in consciousness, disposition and conduct into an animal; and in that state he was to continue till “seven times [or years] passed over him.” This experience is declared to be inflicted by heavenly decree, for the purpose of bringing this one, and all others of the “living,” to “know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the

basest of men" (vs. 17). The idea is, that those who rule should understand that they are simply ordained of God to rule; not as a sign of their greatness,—for He shows in this case that He can set up, at His pleasure, the basest of men.

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. 20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth: 21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: 22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. 23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it: yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him: 24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

THE FATEFUL DREAM INTERPRETED AND APPLIED.—Daniel's reverence, affection and goodwill for Nebuchadnezzar, his captor and autocrat, is shown by the profound dismay which the truth of the matter caused him, and by his sincere wish that the application of the decree might be to the king's enemies. Nevertheless, the faithful servant of Christ fearlessly and fully declared the decree of heaven against the monarch. Yet how gracious it all is: “till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.” How blessed, as well as important, for a ruler to know this! Complaint might almost justly be lodged against God, if He left man without the provision of such important and blessed knowledge. Grace is further displayed in the assurance, “thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule” (vs. 26).

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. 28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

PROBATION ABUSED.—Most faithfully and persuasively Daniel exhorted the king to repent and to do the works of righteousness and benevolence. It is clearly implied that the decree is not one of

fate, but that it is accompanied by long-suffering and readiness still to forgive and to prosper, even as in the case of Nineveh's repentance under Jonah's less gracious preaching two and one-half centuries before. But, after a probation of twelve months, the king was arrogating to himself the greatness of Babylon as being his own achievement of might and for the honor of his own majesty alone.

We should pause here to locate this crisis in Nebuchadnezzar's career.

We see that it is not now a spirit of religious pride, but one of self-exaltation over his political and material greatness. The great tree represents him as having attained to the widest earthly dominion. From Ezekiel 29: 17-20 we get a most important landmark.

And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God. In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

Ezekiel's reckonings are from the captivity of Jehoiachin, 598 B. C., as is made clear by referring to 1: 2 and 40: 1. Therefore the date of the message above would be 572 B. C. According to the passage, Tyre had been finally subdued by "a great service," i. e., a great and protracted effort. History informs us that, subsequently to destroying Jerusalem in 587 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for thirteen years before subduing it. In this siege everything was utterly consumed, so that the conqueror obtained not a farthing's worth of spoil. "Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it." Consequently, inasmuch as "they wrought for me, saith the Lord," the Lord God here declares through Ezekiel that Egypt should now fall into Nebuchadnezzar's hand for a possession and for booty to his army, as wages for the service against Tyre. It is evident that this conclusion of Nebuchadnezzar's world-wide conquests corresponds to the undisputed and unlimited dominion pictured in the dream.

But, besides achieving such conquests abroad, Nebuchadnezzar had for many years been making of Babylon the wonder of the world and of all the ages even to the present day. It was a vast city, four-square, 56 miles in circuit, with walls 350 feet high and 87 feet broad at the top,—wide enough for six chariots to race abreast. The city was celebrated for its immense and magnificent temple and palaces, its noted "hanging gardens,"

which of themselves were one of the “Seven Wonders of the World,” and for much else of unparalleled grandeur. The zenith of Nebuchadnezzar’s ascendancy was reached, then, about 572 B. C., when his unregenerate, idolatrous heart had these abundant reasons for being lifted up and hardened in pride. This conjectural date would leave time for the one year’s probation, the seven year’s dethronement, and a few years of restoration before his death in 561 B. C.

31 While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR DEBASED.—Both in respect to inward consciousness and dispositions and to outward conditions, God cast Nebuchadnezzar from zenith to nadir in a moment. He was wholly bestialized. The fields were his palace, the oxen and the asses his courtiers, the ground his divan, the alfalfa,—which flourished there and which alone of grasses constitutes full nourishment for the human body—was his delicacy. Yet the thunderbolt was hurled upon him for a good end: “Seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know

that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (vs. 32).

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

GOD'S PURPOSE FULFILLED.—The purpose of this remarkable dealing of God with Nebuchadnezzar was most emphatically declared: first by the celestial visitant (vs. 17); then by Daniel (vss. 25-26); and finally by the king himself. It was that Nebuchadnezzar might know and proclaim that God has omnipotent control in the earth; that "the heavens do rule" (vs. 26); that God abases the mightiest for his pride (vs. 37) and raises up the "basest of men" (vs. 17), as He certainly did in this man's case.

We cannot over-estimate the lesson God brought this supreme monarch of Gentile times to accept and heartily to proclaim. It is the key to all his-

tory, as well as to that of the Times of the Gentiles. It is the key to the events which are daily reported to us from all parts of the world of to-day. This is the political message for earthly kings and rulers until Christ shall come: "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Every ruler should acknowledge this humbly and heartily, as did our Lincoln, as did Queen Victoria; the haughtiest is compelled to acknowledge it however unwillingly, as did Napoleon.

It is noticeable in this manifesto to the whole world, that Nebuchadnezzar issues no decree of imperial compulsion to others as to their attitude toward Jehovah, but like any new-born soul he pours out his own heart in praise and loyalty. Would that all rulers "kissed the Son" before his wrath shall be kindled (Psa. 2: 10-12)!

V

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST AND FALL

1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS lie between Chapters 4 and 5. Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 B. C., after a long reign of forty-four years. His son, Evil-Merodach, succeeded him on the throne. An important reference to the latter is found in 2 Kings 35: 27-30 (exactly quoted in Jer. 52: 31-35):

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison, and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

We may safely assume that this act was bequeathed to the new king by his father as a post-mortem kindness to the Jews on Nebuchadnezzar's part; and that it was performed by Evil-Merodach, not only out of filial regard for his father, but also as an act of respect toward the God of the

Hebrews who had so wondrously dealt with his father.

Evil-Merodach reigned, however, but two years, when he was assassinated in the course of a revolt led by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who succeeded to the throne in 559 B. C. His reign was brief. His son Labashi Marduk followed as ruler, but after reigning less than a year he also was killed. Consequently, in 555 B. C. Nabonidus took the throne. He was the father of Belshazzar and was the lawful monarch in 538 B. C., when Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus; but on account of residing elsewhere and of giving his efforts to other centers of the empire, Nabonidus placed the regency at Babylon in the hands of Belshazzar. Although Nabonidus seems not to have been at all of the blood of Nebuchadnezzar, yet it appears that Belshazzar was through his mother a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. 3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem: and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. 5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand

that wrote. 6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. 7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. 8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. 9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

THE MYSTERIOUS HANDWRITING.—Belshazzar provoked this startling and ominous intervention of God by his employing in most licentious orgies, to the praise of his idols, the sacred vessels which many years before had been brought from the house of God in Jerusalem. To prostitute to such use vessels, which the Hebrews themselves dared not put to any use but that of holy symbolical service in the temple of Jehovah, was an act on Belshazzar's part of most flagrant sacrilege.

10 Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: 11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the King Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers: 12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge and understanding, interpreting

of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. 13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? 14 I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. 15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: 16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

AN INTERPRETER FOUND.—According to our conjectural date for Daniel's birth, he would at this time have been an old man of 87 years. It is not strange that he should not have been in Belshazzar's mind for this occasion, or even that he should, as here appears, have been almost unknown to him. For Belshazzar was not the legal king; he had not been long in charge at Babylon; and he evidently was a man of debauchery rather than of statecraft—a man who would be naturally oblivious to the existence of such a character as Daniel.

But it was quite different with the queen, who is probably to be understood to be, not Belshazzar's wife, but his mother, Nabonidus' queen.

She, as probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, not only had long known Daniel well but was, most likely, in close and sympathetic touch with him at this time. She would gladly bring him at this fateful time to Belshazzar's attention, with the most confident assurance that he could decipher and interpret the writing on the palace wall.

Consequently, Daniel was at once admitted to the banquet hall before the king, who was ready to welcome him in confidence of getting the secret revealed. For such service he offered Daniel as reward the highest gift within his power, namely, the third place in the kingdom, in which he himself as vice-regent and as heir apparent occupied the second place.

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known unto him the interpretation. 18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart,

though thou knewest all this; 23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

BELSHAZZAR'S ARRAIGNMENT.—Again we note, that only to those who are in communion with God belongs the gift of finding from the Most High His hidden purposes and the interpretation of the portentous signs which He holds out to earthly view. We are not surprised that, excepting Daniel, the whole Empire lacked a man to reveal the import of the writing. Neither are we surprised that God should still be continuing the life of His faithful servant for this most awful office, nor that Daniel waived the king's flattering offer of reward as being less than a puff-ball to him as the servant of God.

In Daniel's review of God's decisive dealing with Nebuchadnezzar,—in humbling him to know and to proclaim that the heavens rule in earthly affairs, and that they determine each man's position—he cites this striking illustration as a sufficient and lasting revelation and lesson on this score to all kings until Jesus Christ returns. We cannot too strongly characterize the book of Daniel as being in this respect the divine message for all rulers, which they should keep continually be-

fore them, or which should be ever kept before them by the Lord's witnesses. Otherwise rulers will go to their judgment unforewarned.

In arraigning Belshazzar (vss. 22-24), Daniel charges him with the most flagrant defiance of clear light, because of his having been well aware of his grand-father's experience and testimony. It is not at all unlikely that Belshazzar was already born and at an age of intelligence when Nebuchadnezzar passed through that decisive experience. At any rate, from the lips of his mother he had heard the story repeatedly, and most likely he had had the lesson brought home to him urgently as the heir apparent to the throne of Babylon. But, just as the faithful prophet accuses him, he had cast off the whole matter; he had refused to humble himself to God as he well knew that he should; yea, he had, by his scandalous profanation of the holy vessels of God's temple, intentionally defied, mocked and put to open shame the name of the Almighty, in whose hand was his very breath.

Such a prospective successor to the throne gave no hope for the returning of the exiles and of the sacred vessels to Jerusalem when, two years later, the time appointed by God for their release should arrive. Daniel plainly assures the king that on this account "was the part of the hand sent from" God.

25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy king-

dom, and finished it. 27 TEKEL: Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting. 28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about three-score and two years old.

THE FATEFUL DECREE.—These pregnant words (for the interpretation only is in sentences) read: NUMBERED; WEIGHED; DIVIDED; while the word PERES alludes to the similar word Persia. The interpretation presents the full import of the decree in its threefold compass: God hath numbered the years of the Babylonian Empire and terminated it; thou art weighed in the balances of divine authority and found wanting in obedience and service to God; Thy kingdom is cut off and divided between the Medes and the Persians.

The thoughtful reader is supposed to be well acquainted with the notable and extended prophecies of Isaiah (Chs. 13, 14 and 21: 1-10) and of Jeremiah (Chs. 50, 51) which had before been given. They show how momentous was the event of Babylon's overthrow as a matter of awful divine sovereignty, of profound human effect among the nations of the world, and of striking significance in relation to the Jews.

Isaiah says: "Howl ye: for the day of the Lord is at hand: it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. . . . Behold I will stir up the

Medes against them, which shall not regard silver [as a condition of retiring] and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. . . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Is. 13: 6, 17, 19). "For the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land" (14: 1). Again cries the Spirit through Isaiah: "Go up, O Elam [Persia]: besiege, O Media" (21: 2). And, in the same chapter, a most vivid picture is given in few sentences of that awful night, first of revelry, then of sudden destruction: "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasures hath He turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield" (vss. 4, 5). History agrees with the prophecies in recording that the city of Babylon was taken at night, when a great revelry was going on, without opportunity for a single blow of resistance. Cyrus, the captain of the combined forces of the Medes and Persians, diverted the water of the Euphrates, which flowed through the city, to another channel; and, guided by two deserters, he marched into the city through the dry river-bed, gaining access into the city proper through the great brazen gates along the river channel, which were found carelessly left open and unguarded. The sudden, paralyzing announcement of the city's capture was issued by the prophet Isaiah nearly two centuries in advance: "And, behold,

here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (21: 9).

Still more extended is the later prophetic description of Babylon's fall by Jeremiah. The two long chapters, 50 and 51, which are wholly given to it, constitute one of the most graphic and impressive passages of Scripture.

"Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces. . . . Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong: the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon." 50: 2, 31, 33, 34.
"Make bright the arrows: gather the shields: the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it: because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple. . . . The mighty men of Babylon hath forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed: they became as women: they have burned her dwelling places: her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another; and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end. . . . And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. . . . My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." 51: 11, 30, 31, 37, 45.

Belshazzar kept his word in rewarding Daniel

on the spot for the interpretation which the king evidently considered true. And the same night the blow befell him; for God was through with the head of gold, the Babylonian Empire, and with perfect ease and resistless authority He shifted the world-rule to the shoulders and arms of silver—to Medo-Persia under Darius the Median as the first ruler.

The political lesson of this chapter emphasizes that the Son of God is the supreme Sovereign of the earth. Not only are private individuals accountable to Christ for their conduct according to light and opportunity, but so also are great monarchs, yea, even dynasties and empires. All human authority and rule is ordained and stands in direct responsibility to Him. Abraham Lincoln, in proclaiming in 1863 "a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer," embraced in his preamble the words, "devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and nations." With the Senate, he saw in that hour of national travail a call to prayer, not for "success to our arms,"—righteous indeed as seemed to be the cause—but for "clemency and forgiveness"; a call to "national humiliation" "before the offended Power" under a felt "necessity of redeeming and preserving grace." The devout Bible student must feel the lack of this disposition in warring Christendom. And whoever remembers that solemn day has doubtless long prayed that we might hear from Washington again the voice of 1863.

VI

THE LIONS' DEN

1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; 2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give account to them, and the king should have no damage. 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him: and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

DANIEL'S PRIMACY.—As Darius took the throne of the new Empire in 538 B. C. and reigned only two years, the date of this chapter must be about 537 B. C. Daniel must have been about 88 years old. It is remarkable that he was still so hale as to be equal to such official responsibility as Darius placed upon him as the head of the board of three presidents of the realm of one hundred and twenty principalities. Darius even planned to make Daniel his sole executive.

4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever. 7 All the presidents of

the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

THE MALIGN PLOT AGAINST DANIEL.—What a familiar spectacle, as if it were a palace tale of today,—that envious, unscrupulous conspiracy of political rivals! For one so long at the front politically, and the favorite at the hated Babylonian court, to be still pre-eminent in the victor's palace; and, besides, for that one—now in his “dotage” and so “superannuated,” as his rivals no doubt argued—to be displacing “young blood,” was intolerable to these rivals of Machiavellian principles and ambitions. They were, therefore, determined to displace him by any means fair or foul.

What a testimony it was to the integrity and unimpaired ability of Daniel, that they could find none occasion or fault against him on official grounds; for he was faithful in principle and flawless in administration.

There lies in these few lines a whole volume of important suggestion touching the relation of God's servants to earthly affairs of State. Was Daniel out of place as a Christian? Or was he merely an exception, proving the rule that statesmanship is no calling for the Christian? Again,

what procured Daniel this high position? Was it mere personal favoritism? Or was it not the highest sort of civil service ability, along with the trustworthiness which monarchs seek almost in vain for among worldly politicians and courtiers? Well then, it is necessary for a Christian to qualify himself for State service if he is to be entitled and called to positions of State. It is his qualification, as much as any other one's, that commands the position; and even God would not, if He could, keep him there as an incompetent. Now, if God does not desire servants like Daniel in high positions of State, will any one venture to say that He does desire there such men as those who tried to procure Daniel's removal? Why did God rescue and restore Daniel and expel from office and from life his malicious conspirators, if He does not desire Daniels in offices of State and such as Daniel's enemies out of such spheres? It looks decidedly more likely that Satan seeks to command such positions for his faithful minions and to close such positions to God's servants. We need not remain in doubt as to God's will and way in this matter, or as to how to pray and labor in co-operation with Him.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the

king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every one that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he had heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree or statute which the king establisheth may be changed. 16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

WALKING WITH GOD INTO THE DEN OF LIONS.—What a testimony to Daniel's reputation for unconcealed, unfaltering devotion to God, that these conspirators were sure that they now had him in their net! They did not expect Daniel to flinch, to alter his habits of prayer, or even to close his windows toward Jerusalem. And what is faith, if it is not taking God at His word just where the need of His promise is greatest? Daniel was trusting God exactly to fulfil 2 Chron. 6: 38, 39:

If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwellingplace, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause.

If ever Daniel's window needed to be kept open toward Jerusalem, and if ever Daniel needed to be upon his knees in real supplication and thanksgiving without regard to any one's eye but God's, it was when he needed God to fulfil this promise to maintain his cause and his right. It was from there in that chamber, and in just that way, that in heaven the mouths of those lions yonder were first to be stopped. Even poor Darius, cut to the heart that he had fallen into such a trap, seemed to catch faith from Daniel's course. He reasoned that no God could fail such a devoted, intrepid, undoubting servant.

18 Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me: and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23

Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

THE MISERABLE KING MADE HAPPY.—The central place at this crucial point of the narrative is advisedly given by our paragraph-heading to the king. Which of the two men was made happy by the outcome? And upon which did God have His eye chiefly in ordering this outcome? Certainly Daniel was not happier when he came out of the den of lions than when he went in. He was calm all the way. He would have been equally happy had his body been devoured for his faith. To depart and be with the Son of God would have been for him far better. But it was needful for Darius that Daniel be spared. Why did God save Daniel from the lions and not save the Christians whom wicked Roman emperors threw to the lions? God had mercy upon the well-meaning, piously disposed Darius and was pleased to turn his distress into joy; and God had a good use to make of Darius in consequence of His kindness to him. But it was not so at all in the case of those cruel, impious and useless Roman emperors.

Two expressions in this paragraph stand out in letters of light. First, “whom thou servest continually” (vs. 20); i. e., uninterruptedly, no matter what opposes. Darius had borne the same witness the night before when he unwillingly committed Daniel to the lions’ den (vs. 16). The other golden testimony is in the words, “because

he believed in his God" (vs. 23). There is no evidence that Daniel had any more assurance of escaping the lions alive than his three friends had of escaping the fiery furnace alive. But his believing in his God was the more emphatically proved by following God right into the den nevertheless.

24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. 25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

THE STANDING LESSON FOR GENTILE TIMES.—There is logical connection between this judgment upon Daniel's accusers and this decree of Darius to all his subjects. Above Darius the autocrat it was this "God of Daniel," this "living God," that procured this end to the men who thought to bring Daniel to his death by virtue of his faith in his God. Their judgment furnished a lurid back-ground for the edict of Darius, that all his subjects should "tremble and fear before

the God of Daniel.” This was more than a decree of religious toleration for the Jews, which was the farthest that Nebuchadnezzar went by any commandment to his realm; this was compulsion to pay trembling reverence to Daniel’s God. It amounted almost, if not quite, to incorporating the worship of Jehovah into the religion of the Empire. This was God’s voice to all Gentile powers, to be regarded as long as His Israel remains scattered and subject among the Gentiles. This chapter, like the previous chapters, should be constantly before all Gentile authorities until Jesus comes again.

Darius enforces his decree by noble reasons and testimonies: that the God of the Jews is the living God, eternally unchangeable, whose kingdom is imperishable, unlike earthly empires, and whose dominion shall prevail on earth at the end when Israel shall be again restored. “He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” Yea, this deliverance of Daniel was a type of the deliverance which God will effect for the final faithful remnant of Israel, when they shall have been brought into the lion’s pit of the devouring Antichrist.

The last verse concludes the record of Daniel’s political career. Over into his nineties he must have “prospered” as the chief adviser and executive at the Persian court, inducting the first two monarchs—the one representing the Median, the other the Persian section of the dual monarchy—

into their careers as the divinely appointed sovereigns over the Jewish dispersion.

We have concluded the first half of the book of Daniel,—the historical section. How deeply it has impressed us with God's intention to have this Scripture serve as His text-book of Imperial policy for all the Gentile sovereigns under whom His Israel have been scattered!—as wanderers from their land; without rulers, without nationality; never amalgamated politically or converted religiously; objects of natural hatred and envy, and an easy prey to every foe.

In closing this section of the book, which we have found invaluable as the statesman's manual, we may appropriately draw one more lesson—a lesson for the statesmen of a Republic. Shall such a statesman "dare to be a Daniel"? Or shall such a statesman keep his religion under his coat's lapel? In other words, Is it an ideal principle of government, which so divorces State and Church, that, in official capacity, the statesman must be a religious neutral? In still other words, Is positive religion out of place in civil position; or is civil position simply another place for positive religion? The latter was certainly Daniel's view and example in the matter. While he divorced his religion from State support, yet he always supported the State only as a pious Jew. Is, then, a true follower of Jesus authorized to enter civil service, even in a Republic, excepting to follow and glorify Jesus there at whatever cost?

VII

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

THE reader is requested to turn to this chapter in his Bible, and carefully to notice how it is constructed after the following outline. This will greatly help in a simple treatment of an otherwise difficult chapter.

INTRODUCTION—Vs. 1.

Part 1—The Vision and Its General Interpretation.—Vss. 2–18.

1. THE VISION, vss. 2–14.

(a) Terrestrial Scene: Procession of four Beasts, vss. 2–8.

(b) Celestial Scene: Succession of the Son of Man to Universal Rule on Earth, vss. 9–14.

2. THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION, vss. 15–18.

Introduction, vss. 15, 16.

(a) Interpretation of Terrestrial Scene, vs. 17.

(b) Interpretation of Celestial Scene, vs. 18.

Part 2—Fuller Details of Last Stages of Vision and Their Interpretation.—Vss. 19–27.

1. INQUIRY FOR FURTHER LIGHT, verses 19–20.

(a) On the Fourth Beast, vs. 19.

(b) On the Ten Horns, vs. 20.

(c) On the Little Horn and the Saints, vss. 20–22.

2. ANSWER TO THESE INQUIRIES, vss. 23-27.

- (a) On the Fourth Beast, vs. 23.
- (b) On the Ten Horns, vs. 24.
- (c) On the Little Horn and the Saints, vss.

24-27.

CONCLUSION—Vs. 28.

We will follow this outline in seeking for the unfolding of the chapter to our understanding.

INTRODUCTION—Vs. 1.

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.—

There is good ground for assuming that it was in the third year of his reign that Belshazzar was killed at the capture of Babylon. This was in 538 B. C.; which would make the date of this vision 541 B. C. Daniel would be at the time about 84 years old. We have already learned that Belshazzar was only the acting king at the capital. From what we learned of him in chapter 5, we can understand that, at this point in the history of Babylon, the empire was being committed to its doom under the regency of this reckless, dissolute and sacrilegious ruler.

Daniel was probably being left to insignificance and obscurity, as far as Belshazzar was concerned. But this would afford him the better opportunity to address himself to the most important ministry of his life, that of being God's revelator of the

momentous future of Gentile powers and of the Jews. At so great an age—still standing like a cedar of Lebanon; his hoary head a crown of glory; spirit, mind and body ripe and strong for their mightiest conflicts and victories—God took him into this apocalyptic ministry in which he has no peer excepting the aged Apostle John. And the two are remarkably related. Daniel reveals the last days with respect to the coming of the Jews into terrestrial supremacy over the earth under their Messiah; John reveals the last days with respect to the coming of the Church into celestial supremacy over the earth with her glorified Head. The vision of the four beasts was the first of four revelations which were given to Daniel in his last years, and they occupy the last half of his book (Chs. 7-12).

No more explicit claim that Daniel lived at that time, received this revelation, himself wrote every word of it and handed it down just as it is, could be made than the verse above asserts. To assign the composition to other hands, of a later time, is utterly to invalidate the entire book.

Part 1—The Vision and Its General Interpretation.—Vss. 2-18.

We may first make some observations which apply not only to the vision before us, but also to the succeeding ones.

Because of being presented to the prophet's mind largely in symbols, the visions required interpretation. But all essential interpretation was

given in each instance to Daniel, who was always very deeply exercised to know the truth which the symbols concealed. This interpretation and understanding which was given to him is the light, the only light, the all-sufficient light to us.

That we have the advantage over Daniel of a later historical position, affords us no advantage in point of the revelation itself, but only in point of historical counterpart to the revelation. For the purpose of revelation, then, we must stand entirely at his point of view; while for the purpose of marking accomplished fulfilment of revelation we stand at our present historical stage of progress.

Again, that we have the advantage over Daniel of later and completed revelation on the last days, must not lead us to treat Daniel's revelations as though they were left obscure and incomplete, requiring further revelations to clear them up and complete them. We may read Daniel's revelations, not only under the light which he had from earlier and from contemporaneous prophets, but also with the light which later predictions and revelations afford; but we must always remember in dealing with the book of Daniel, that what was revealed to him was complete in itself and perfectly interpreted to his understanding. We are to treat his records, therefore, as complete and self-explanatory for us. We must not import into Daniel keys of interpretation and theories regarding Gentile Times and the last days, which would deprive his revelations of original authority and of direct self-sufficiency. We need to take these



records as first sources, all-sufficient sources, self-interpreting sources.

1. THE VISION, vss. 2-14.

(a) Terrestrial Scene: Procession of Four Beasts, vss. 2-8.

2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads: and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

(b) Celestial Scene: Succession of the Son of Man to Universal Rule on Earth, vss. 9-14.

9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him:

thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

That this panorama must have been identical to Daniel's mind with that of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the Great Image and the Stone, can be assumed confidently from several considerations.

1. They were both presented in symbols which called for an interpretation of their hidden meaning.

2. Even without any further interpretation, this latter vision in its second part (vs. 9-14) very clearly identifies this revelation with that of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as interpreted by Daniel, as a panorama of earthly dominion existing until abruptly terminated by the intervention of the everlasting kingdom from heaven.

3. The succession of beasts is the same in number as that of the component metals of the image; and their succession evinces the same deterioration in point of quality and of unity which was so

emphasized in the describing of the image from its head to its feet.

4. There is in both cases the same focusing of attention upon, and the same expanded description of, the latest stages of the progression, especially that of the utter final displacement of all other dominion by the intervention of the everlasting heavenly kingdom.

We are not surprised, therefore, that so little in the way of general interpretation was necessary for Daniel, although that little was evidently imperatively needed.

2. THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION, vss. 15-18.

Introduction, vss. 15, 16.

15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me to know the interpretation of the things.

DANIEL'S ANXIOUS CONCERN AND INQUIRY.—
It is apparent that this vision produced the most intense anxiety in Daniel's spirit and mind. But he had recourse open to him to "them that stood by." Certainly these were not human authorities, who could understand no more than he could. This book abounds in illustrations of angelic ministration; and in this instance we have evidence that the authority for the correct understanding of this vision is angelic. Daniel asked for "the truth of all this;" and he declares that the angel not only told him, but that he also made

him know the interpretation of the things. Worse than fiction, worse than imposition, is the whole book, if these points are not to be taken as represented; it would be nothing short of sacrilege to impute mere invention to these representations.

(a). Interpretation of Terrestrial Scene,
vs. 17.

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

(b). Interpretation of Celestial Scene, vs. 18.

But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

(a). **THE FOUR BEASTS.**—In connection with the explanation of verse 17 that these four beasts are four kings, we need to remember that we learned from the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that the word "king" may be used for kingdom or empire; and not only covering the incumbency of a given king but also covering the entire duration of the empire itself. "Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom." And here in chapter 7, verse 23, we read: "And the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth." Hence, it was made certain to Daniel that these four beasts represented the same procession of world-empires which the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream portrayed.

ORIGIN AND LOCATION OF THESE EMPIRES.— "Behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea, and four beasts came up from the

sea," vss. 2, 3. From preceding testimony of this book regarding the control of earthly movements by heaven, we are not presuming too much in understanding by these winds the stupendous operations of heavenly, angelic forces—those of light and those of darkness in conflict. These four empires, therefore, had their real origin under celestial operations.

But how is the expression, "the great sea," to be taken? In harmony with the symbolical character of the rest of the description, we would be inclined to take this expression as symbolical—say, of the sea of humanity. There is no other use of this term in exactly this sense. There are, however, several occurrences in Scripture of the expression, "the great sea," in a strictly geographical meaning, indicating the Mediterranean Sea. And that sense would well apply here.

This Sea may be truly said to be the ganglion, or nerve center, of these four great historic empires. The first one, the Babylonian, of Daniel's day, did not rest in its course of conquest until it obtained undisputed control of the entire eastern coast of the Mediterranean. The second, the Medo-Persian, claimed not only the east coast, but also the north coast to the Aegean Sea; and Xerxes endeavored to make conquest beyond the Aegean. The third empire, the Grecian, arose, of course, adjacent to the Mediterranean on the north; and it made sure, at the outset, of all the easterly section of the north coast and of all the

east coast of the Mediterranean. The fourth empire, the Roman, swept under its conquering tread all the Mediterranean coasts as well as all the imperial east. It seems to be most fitting, then, to believe that Daniel was shown in his vision the geographical theater of this great drama of the Times of the Gentiles.

THE APT SYMBOLISM OF THESE EMPIRES.—The four beasts chosen as symbols of these empires form a group of descending grades of nobility—if nobility can be ascribed to wild beasts. This indicated that, in the divine view, the four empires succeeded one another in a descending scale as to governmental quality. Hence, Babylon is symbolized by the lion, the king of beasts. His conquest of the world is likened to the majestic swoop of the eagle, the noblest creature of the skies. Most striking is the picture of the check, on the one hand, of Nebuchadnezzar's career of dizzy pride by his debasement—"the wings thereof were plucked"—and of his elevation, on the other hand, from his grovelling condition, and his restoration to true kingly stature, having "a man's heart" given to him, i. e., a heart to acknowledge his dependence upon God. The bear fitly represents Medo-Persia, a dual empire, rising to superior power on one side, the Persian. Its propensity for conquest is depicted as of a grosser type than that of the previous empire, and the three ribs seen in its mouth represent, probably, the three great kingdoms which it crunched

in its maw: Babylon, Lydia and Egypt. The duality of this empire shows deterioration in firmness as well as in quality.

The leopard signifies the Grecian empire, and it is a fit symbol. It is a stealthy, revengeful beast; and the Grecian conquest was one of stealthy revenge. The four wings indicate the incredible swiftness of the conquest of Alexander the Great; and yet they are the wings of a mere fowl of the air. Still greater deterioration in governmental compactness and stability is indicated by the development into "four heads." The Roman empire, the boast of the human historian, finally follows under the symbol of an indescribably hideous beast without name or classification—not worthy of being represented as a hyena or a coyote. It is a monster, with "great iron teeth."—What greed! "It devoured." What ruthlessness! "It brake in pieces." What destructive rage! "It stamped the residue with the feet of it." This is Roman militarism, which broke out again in the European debacle of 1914. In the fourth beast there is deterioration again in quality, and also at the last in respect to unity.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.—"It had ten horns." Evidently these correspond to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image which marked "the latter days" of the times covered by the panorama. But here the vision adds a feature before unrevealed, "another little horn." Its rise is not at once with the ten, but later among them; and it acquires supremacy over them, as

is indicated by its plucking up three of them by the roots. This, then, is the symbolical representation of the last organized form of the Roman empire: a ten-fold monarchical division (remember the democratic admixture revealed by the image), with a new-comer gaining the dominance of all. He is represented as being, not merely a conqueror and a ruler, but also a remarkable Seer and a presumptuous Prophet. Contrast this man of acuteness of mind and arrogance of speech with the first monarch of the series, who was at least characterized by having "a man's heart," i. e., a heart to acknowledge God devoutly and loyally. How rapidly an era of brains and mouth, of science and godless talk, is now developing! While we are not yet in "the last days" of Gentile Times, yet how plainly present tendencies point to a not-distant re-mapping of the sphere of the Roman empire into ten monarchico-democratic kingdoms; to the prevalence of an era of vaulting brainishness and boastful godlessness; and to a man as ultimate lord in the earth, who, with all Satanic wisdom and power embodied in him, will command the admiration and obedience of all who will not that Christ shall come and rule in the earth.

WHY BEASTS FOR SYMBOLS OF THE EMPIRES?

—We must bow in respect to this expression of the divine estimate of the character of this world's imperial rule. What are the attributes of beasts? To keep their own at any cost within their might; to quarrel over what they do not have, but what

they want; to fly easily into blood-thirsty rage at any affront, at any aggression, for any coveted object; under passion, to take utmost satisfaction in the blood, the agonies, the loss, the death of the objects of their rage; in a word, to be supreme in rule, in possession, in indulgence, in so far as their power can avail.

God foresaw this spirit prevalent in the world-empires down to the end. Indeed, it is the very spirit of world-empire. And militarism is its indispensable implement. The matter can scarcely be put more baldly and impressively than was done recently by an Austrian army officer. “‘Live and let live,’ is no device for an army. Contempt for one’s own comrades, for the troops of the enemy, and, above all, a fierce contempt for one’s own person, are what war demands of every one. Far better is it for any army to be too savage, too cruel, too barbarous, than to possess too much sentimentality and human reasonableness. If the soldier is to be good for anything as a soldier, he must be exactly the opposite of a thinking and reasoning man. The measure of goodness in him is his possible use in war. War, and even peace, require of a soldier absolutely peculiar standards of morality. The recruit brings with him the common moral notions, of which he must seek immediately to get rid. For him victory, success, must be everything. The most barbaric tendencies [we may well say, the most beastly tendencies] in men come to life again in war, and for war’s uses they are incommensurably good.” So

then, "If nations are to be good for anything as militaristic [imperialistic] nations, they must be exactly the opposite of thinking and reasoning nations;" i. e., they must be as beasts in God's sight.

And there is commercial imperialism as well as political imperialism; there is the lust for dominance in world-wide trade. This may almost be said to be the prime motive of modern imperialism. It is a fair question, whether it is race-envy or commercial envy which is inciting the present international strife. How infected all nations are with this poison! Militarism has to be its resort just as much as that of political imperialism. Greed for trade will fight as ferociously as greed for political sway. How alarmingly our own United States is hurtling along this pathway of commercial imperialism! And the counsel is urged that, if we are to obtain and retain our own share of world-wide trade,—to say nothing of getting and keeping the lion's share of that trade—adequate military and naval preparation must straightway be made for the time when we shall come to grips with both eastern and western worlds.

(b). THE CELESTIAL INTERPOSITION.—The words, "I beheld till," show that what is now presented ensues upon the preceding spectacle. It is not contemporaneous with it, neither does it grow out of it. It is an abrupt interposition to it, from another, namely, the celestial quarter. That scene was in the terrestrial sphere; this is in the

celestial, but having directly to do with that. That was a picture, beastly, though human; this is a picture angelic and divine.

In taking up this part of the vision, we must be guided by the general interpretation of it given in verse 18. By this explanation we learn that the purport of this celestial scene is to reveal how that the rule in the earth is to be transferred from beasts to saints; more particularly we may put it, how that the Times of the Gentiles—the times of Gentile supremacy over Israel, “the saints of the Most High” by calling—is to be inverted, and Israel is again to come to her place as God’s chosen and glorified kingdom on earth.

THE EXCHANGE OF DOMINION IN THE SKY.—The expression, “the thrones were cast down,” shows that there is an overthrow of existing dominion in the sphere above, to give place to the new dominion. “The Ancient of Days” can be none other than God Almighty and Eternal. He is represented as taking His throne in quarters where had stood thrones which must be cast down before Him. It implies the forcible expulsion of former occupants hostile to God Almighty.

We know of no sphere, besides this earth, where such conditions exist, excepting our skies above; there, Scripture teaches us, Satan is still enthroned with a thoroughly organized kingdom of darkness. See Eph. 6: 12. From thence, it is represented, Satan exercises rule in this earth. On this account Jesus calls him “the prince of this world,” who, He says, “hath nothing in me” (John

14: 30). The Apostle Paul calls him "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4); and in Eph. 2: 2 he calls him "the prince of the power of the air," i. e., the head of the power located in, and ruling from, the sky. Jesus declares this prince to be already judged by His finished redeeming work (John 16: 11); He plainly foresees that he would be "cast out" (John 12: 31); and He relates that He had in vision seen "Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10: 18).

The most extended and graphic description of this coming expulsion of Satan and of his whole empire from our heaven is recorded by the Apostle John in Rev. 12: 7-10 as a part of the momentous coming events which were revealed to him:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ:

It should be noticed that this passage represents also that the expulsion of Satan gives place to the manifestation of the kingdom of God and the power of Christ. The assumption by the Lord God Almighty of throne-possession and administration in the sky above is extendedly recorded as foreseen by John in Rev. 4; and the same hosts

of angelic attendants are mentioned in Rev. 5: 11. (The writer is aware that the R. V. prefers the translation of Dan. 7: 9 thus: "the thrones were placed." In that case we would understand that thrones attendant upon God Almighty are in view, such as those mentioned in Rev. 4: 4: "And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white raiment: and on their heads were crowns of gold" (R. V.). But the expulsion of former hostile occupants would none the less still be implied).

THE JUDGMENT UPON THE HORN AND HIS EMPIRE.—"The judgment was set, and the books were opened." This court of judgment in the sky is evidently convened to render final decision upon conditions obtaining in the earth, through Satanic influences, from the beginning of Gentile dominion over Israel under Nebuchadnezzar unto its final agent, the little horn—the Antichrist. In this last ruler all the ungodly principles of this dominion will culminate. It is indicated that the climax of his offensiveness to God is reached in "the voice of the great words which the horn spake"—words presumptuous and self-glorifying after the manner of Nebuchadnezzar in his vaunting pride—words blasphemous beyond precedent.

The verdict rendered and put into execution is seen to be the slaying of the beast; which must mean, not only the end of the horn itself as the actual ruler, but of the whole imperial system as

well. Verse 12 carries this judgment back upon the preceding beasts. Distinction is made between the dominion and the life of these empires. We must remember that each succeeding empire embraced the territory of nations held under its predecessor. So, while dominion was taken away from one head and transferred to another, yet the life of the component members of the body of the empire was continued. So while the ungodly imperial fabric will be done away with by Christ, yet nations themselves will, at His pleasure, still be spared for the millennial age. See Matt. 25: 31-46.

THE NEW APPOINTEE TO THE DOMINION OF THE EARTH.—Verses 13, 14 are so clear as to need little comment. No one could question that they depict the appointment by Almighty God—who ruleth in heaven and on earth—of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, to the direct reign in sovereign dignity over all earthly peoples and nations and languages. The important thing to notice is that His investiture with this authority and power—as the culmination of the august assize which is to be held in the sky over us after Satan's ejection and after the Almighty takes effective personal possession there with all His angelic hosts—is the first stage of the establishing of the everlasting kingdom of God in the earth. But, as we saw before, the angelic interpretation given in verse 18 represents this result as being the succession of “the saints of the Most High” to everlasting kingdom; which means the restoration forever

of the theocratic kingdom of Israel. This brings us right up to the subject of the rest of the chapter; which subject was the matter of supreme interest to Daniel, whom God made the revelator of the last days from the standpoint of Jewish interests.

Part 2—Fuller Details of Vision and Interpretation in Their Last Stages.—Vss. 19-27.

1 INQUIRY FOR FURTHER LIGHT, vss. 19-22.

19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

FOCUS OF THE INQUIRY.—Careful attention to this paragraph will show one that Daniel's inquiry is not strictly three-fold, to wit, for fuller light co-ordinately upon the fourth beast, the ten horns and the little horn. Passing by the appalling procession of beasts,—passing by even the awe-inspiring setting of the celestial conquest and judgment—he begins with the fourth beast and its ten horns a very anxious inquiry regarding the little horn. Consequently, in re-describing the fourth beast he does no more than to identify it,

excepting that he notes that it had “nails of brass” as well as “teeth of iron” with which to do its destructive work. In like manner he merely identifies “the ten horns that were in his head.” But when he directs his inquiry upon the little horn, he not only repeats the detailed description first given, adding emphasis to the excessive audaciousness of this personage, but his inquiry bears especially upon an altogether new feature of great importance: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them: until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

This “war with the saints” is an entirely new picture of conditions associated with the appearing of the Ancient of Days; and this feature is evidently the point of Daniel’s inquiry. He wished to know more fully about the horn’s warring against the saints with such overwhelming effect, until, by the interposition of the Ancient of Days, the saints of the Most High were avenged of their destroyer and were brought into possession of the kingdom. The point of the inquiry relates to this marvellous inversion, by which earthly saints are snatched at the very article of extermination from a raging monarch and oppressor and are themselves brought right into the inheritance of the kingdom in the earth. Clear vision at this point cannot fail to perceive that this is the description of an experience awaiting the saints of earthly Israel.

2. ANSWER TO THE INQUIRY, vss. 23-27.

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time: 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose dominion is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

FOCUS OF THE ANSWER.—Careful attention to this paragraph will discover that the answer to Daniel's inquiry follows exactly the same plan that we have noticed in the inquiry itself. The main point of the answer is approached through a repetition of the identifying description of the fourth beast, or "kingdom," and of the ten horns, or "ten kings that shall arise." The answer culminates in an extended explanation of the other king's war upon the saints, and of the Most High's intervention to transfer the kingdom from their destroyer to their own hands forevermore. Consequently, the answer or explanation proper begins with verse 25. Our attention should, then, rest wholly upon the interpretation which the

angel gives of what Daniel saw “the little horn,” as the final exponent of Gentile Times, doing to God’s chosen people whom He, in indignation for their rebellions, had just committed in Daniel’s day to Gentile supremacy; and also upon the interpretation of that reversal of their fortunes which Daniel saw the Most High bring about.

In passing let us notice that verse 24 clearly shows that the little horn is to be an individual king; and that the ten horns are also to be individual kings, namely, the contemporaneous rulers of ten kingdoms which shall constitute the formation of the fourth empire in its last days.

THE FINAL PERSECUTION OF ISRAEL.—Verse 25 explains the nature of the horn’s great words.” They are a direct defiance of the Most High. But who is this Most High personally? Verse 27 represents that universal earthly acknowledgment shall be accorded both to “the saints of the Most High” and to the Most High Himself. Verse 18, which interprets verses 9-14, is in harmony with verse 27 in showing that “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.” But verses 13 and 24 call the heavenly One, together with whom the kingdom is to be given to the saints, “the Son of Man.” Hence the Most High and the Son of Man must be one and the same person; and both expressions mean simply the Messiah of the Jews, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Against Him, then, directly and personally, are the great words of defiance to be spoken by the last Gentile lord over Israel. His people it is

that this Antichrist shall "wear out," whose festival "times" also and inviolable "laws" he will assay "to change." "And they shall be given into his hands until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." That is, the still unpurified Jewish people shall be delivered over by God, without mercy or restraint, to this malignant and defiant destroyer for 3½ times, or years.

Over and over Old Testament prophecy represents that the Jews are to suffer a brief season of unequalled tribulation just at the end of their long time of punishment, out of which final retribution a remnant of Israel shall be saved to suffer no more forever; e. g., Jer. 30: 7, 8:

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.

That but a remnant of the Jews, because of their penitence, will come safely out of that awful day, is shown in Joel 2: 11, 31, 32:

And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

That this great tribulation will be shortened, lest all the Israelitish elect should perish, is declared by our Savior, Matt. 25: 21, 22:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days were shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Another New Testament passage shows why Israel was cut off, on what condition alone it is possible for her to be restored, the fact that such complete restoration of all surviving Israel will succeed "the fulness of the Gentiles," and that this salvation will be by the intervention of their covenanted Deliverer. See Rom. 11: 23, 25-27:

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in, for God is able to graff them in again. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT IN BEHALF OF ISRAEL.

—It will render verses 26 and 27 more vivid to give Leeser's striking translation: "But they will sit down to hold judgment, and they will take away his dominion, to destroy and to annihilate it unto the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the power over the kingdoms under the whole

heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all governments are to worship and obey Him."

Explanation could not render it clearer—that the present order of Gentile rule over scattered Israel is to close with the organization of the fourth empire under ten kings; that over these ten an upstart shall gain the Caesarship, and shall crown his reign with inconceivable defiance of the returning Messiah and with annihilating measures against the Jews and all their institutions; that at the time appointed, i. e., after three and one half years, the judgment shall fall from heaven upon this destroyer, annihilating him and the whole imperial fabric; and that thereupon the Most High—in the person of the Messiah, the Son of Man—shall bring the holy remnant of Israel into the kingdom promised to them from Abraham down, and shall place them in power forever over all kingdoms under heaven, by requiring all governments to worship and obey their King as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords."

28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

EFFECT OF THE REVELATION UPON DANIEL.—
We can in some degree enter into sympathy with Daniel regarding this disclosure of the solution of that great problem which had weighed upon his

heart since the indignation of God began to be poured out upon Israel in their captivity and their subjection to the Gentiles. Even the problem of the Babylonian captivity was a burning question, as a careful reading of Jer. 29 will show. Opinions and prophecies directly opposed to God's plan were rife and pretentious. How much weightier the problem of Israel's long retirement from her high calling to earthly supremacy! No one, perhaps, ever gave himself like Daniel to waiting upon God for the solution of this inscrutable problem. Daniel so impersonated the nation before God, both in her affliction and in her high and irreversible calling, as to move heaven to disclose the momentous secret. And the prophetic vision was needed for the support and comfort of pious Jews throughout the Times of the Gentiles.

VIII

VISION OF THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT

THE reader is again urged first to examine this chapter carefully in his Bible. He will find the chapter to be very distinctly constructed after the outline below. Such examination will greatly help the reader of these pages to perceive the unfolding of the vision, as we study the material of the chapter in its successive parts according to this outline.

INTRODUCTION—Vss. 1, 2.

Part 1—The Vision.—Vss. 3–14.

1. THE VISION PROPER, vss. 3–12.
 - (a) The Ram and the He-Goat, vss. 3–8.
 - (b) The Little Horn, vss. 9–12.
2. SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY VISION, vss. 13, 14.

Part 2—The Interpretation.—Vss. 15–26.
Introduction, vss. 15–19.

1. INTERPRETATION PROPER, vss. 20–25.
 - (a) Medo-Persia and Greece, vss. 20–22.
 - (b) The King of Fierce Countenance, vss. 23–25.
2. CONFIRMATION OF SPECIAL VISION, vs. 26.

CONCLUSION—Vs. 27.

INTRODUCTION—Vss. 1, 2.

1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE VISION.—The fact that Daniel in his vision was at the palace of the capital city of the province of Elam, which city some time after the fall of Babylon became the capital of the succeeding Medo-Persian Empire, would strongly imply that the reign of Belshazzar, the last ruler of Babylon, was about to close. Hence, we infer that “the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar” was his last, and that the date of this vision was, accordingly, 538 B. C. This would make Daniel’s age about 87 years. It was a most appropriate time for him to receive a vision in which Babylon is entirely lost from view.

Part 1—The Vision.—Vss. 3–14.

This vision falls into two parts. The first part is the main vision which was directly presented to Daniel; the second part is a special communication on a particular point of the vision, which communication was given to Daniel under very special circumstances.

1. THE VISION PROPER, vss. 3–12.

This main vision is also twofold, the first part being but the background to the second, which is the matter of prime interest and notice.

(a) The Ram and the He-Goat, vss. 3-8.

3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. 5 And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8 Therefore, the he-goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it, came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

THE RAM.—Daniel must have recognized in this ram the bear-kingdom of the previous vision. The same dual organization is indicated by the two horns, even the fact that one member of the dual kingdom was to be superior to the other. The fact that the stronger member was to be last to take precedence was a new feature. Then, the description of the ram's conquest of three territories—"westward, and northward, and southward"—agrees with the symbol of the three ribs seen in the bear's mouth.

THE GOAT.—While this vision is much more

detailed than that of the leopard in 7: 6, yet the essentials—the celerity of progress, and the abruptness of dismemberment—are clearly parallel in the two visions. So that Daniel must have felt the more convinced that thus far this vision retraced, although with different symbolism, ground already twice covered, namely, in the previous vision and in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image.

(b) The Little Horn, vss. 9–12.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

JEWISH CONQUEST, DESECRATION AND JUDGMENT.—We go on tracing what must have been plain to Daniel during the progress of the vision, before interpretation was given, in order the better to catch the interpretation of that which needed to be interpreted. In the description of this conqueror's progress, the last expression of verse 9, "the pleasant land," must have meant to Daniel his native land, the Holy Land. Then, the expression in verse 10, "the host of heaven," must have meant to him his own people, the only nation on earth to be properly considered heaven's earthly

host. "The stars" would mean the leaders of his people who should be their spiritual luminaries. Verse 11 describes awful desecration, defiance of the heavenly Prince of Daniel's people, termination of the daily burnt offering, and overthrow of the "place of his," the Prince's, "sanctuary"—the holy temple itself. But verse 12 shows that all this is in the nature of a judgment upon the "host of heaven." Leeser's translation of this verse helps very much: "And the host is given up together with the continual sacrifice, by reason of transgression: and it casteth down the truth to the ground, and it doth (this), and is prosperous." This shows that people and religious sanctities are to be wholly delivered over to that malignant, godless power to wreak his sacrilegious will and to prosper in doing so. This adds light to what had already been revealed in 7: 25: "And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

2. SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY VISION, vss. 13, 14.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

VINDICATION.—This special inquiry which one angel made of another in Daniel's hearing, the answer to which the latter angel addressed to Daniel, relates to the length of time during which the

sanctuary and the host should be trodden under foot. The words of the reply, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (marginal reading, "justified"), shows that the question of interest is, when the vindication against such indignities should be granted.

How evident it is that the weight of the vision of this chapter has to do with the little horn's dealings with Daniel's people, with their sacred house, and with their observances! This dealing is shown to be a judgment for transgression, followed, however, by a glorious vindication. The approach to this main body of the vision is through a panorama of the familiar second and third empires down to the coming of a fearful conqueror and oppressor of the Jews, who shall spring out of one of the four divisions of the third empire. This division is seen to be not the southern, or the eastern division, and perhaps not even the one reaching "toward the pleasant land."

Part 2—The Interpretation.—Vss. 15–26.

The interpretation follows the divisions which we have observed in the course of the vision and its supplement.

Introduction, vss. 15–19.

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said

unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. 18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

DANIEL'S PREPARATION FOR UNDERSTANDING THE VISION.—Notwithstanding there was so much in this vision which, as we have reasonably conjectured, Daniel must have understood from what had been supplied by the previous vision and by Nebuchadnezzar's dream, yet the real vital purport of it was evidently still a deep mystery to him.

This impresses us with the fact, that each one of the five revelations—the first one being that given to Nebuchadnezzar, the other four being those given directly to Daniel through his four visions—constitutes a distinctive portion of a composite revelation of one and the same grand consummation. We have seen that the first one, that of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, distinctively revealed the coming of the kingdom of heaven to supersede the Times of the Gentiles. We have seen that the vision of the Four Beasts had for its object a further distinctive revelation, which had to be wholly interpreted to Daniel notwithstanding there was so much which the dream of Nebuchadnezzar had already made intelligible to him. This further revelation was that the saints of Israel were to inherit that kingdom of heaven. We

are prepared now to find in the interpretative part of the present chapter a further distinctive portion of this composite revelation of the last days.

We notice that Daniel "sought for the meaning" of the vision (vs. 15). One abundantly qualified, even the angel Gabriel, was directed to "make this man understand the vision" (vs. 15). The same addressed the charge to Daniel, "Understand" (vs. 17); and he also assured him, "I will make thee know" (vs. 19). This prepares us to believe that such competent pains were taken for Daniel's understanding, that we may rely upon the interpretation as being sufficiently clear not only for Daniel but for ourselves also. Only, we must put ourselves in Daniel's place and let exactly what afforded him his understanding afford us ours also.

MOST NOTEWORTHY is the care the angel took to rivet Daniel's eye beforehand upon the same last days with which he was already familiar, as the time with which this new vision had to do. This the angel accomplished by a three-fold reiteration: "At the time of the end shall be the vision" (vs. 17), "I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation" (vs. 19); "For at the time appointed the end shall be" (vs. 19). Leeser's translation is more striking still: "Because for the time of the end is the vision"; "I will make known unto thee what is to be in the last end of the indignation"; "For it is for the appointed time of the end." Could an archangel's authority and care go farther to make

it plain, before the interpretation itself is given, that the matter to be divulged belongs to the very end of the dispensation under consideration?

THE KEY TO THE MEANING.—In those words, “I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation,” we have the key to the meaning of the vision.

As we saw at the beginning of our study, the chronological point of departure from which the whole book of Daniel proceeds—namely, “the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim the king of Judah,” when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem the first time and instituted the first stage of the Jewish captivity—was the very hour when, in the historical, political, and religious status of the Jews, there began for them that crucial transition—from an independent relationship to the Lord as their King and to His favor, to a relationship to His sovereignty and favor which subsisted through the medium of the imperial supremacy of the Gentiles.

In that day, when God’s long-restrained indignation was beginning to be signally manifested against His persistently rebellious people—in their downfall, their captivity, and their subjection to Gentile rule—this expression, “the last end of the indignation,” could mean to a Jew like Daniel nothing less than the longed-for, the final,—but even yet unreached—end of Israel’s expulsion from her kingdom and of her committal to world-wide dispersion and derision by the unsparing judgment of her Lord. The angel ap-

prises Daniel that this vision was given for the purpose of unveiling the closing stage of God's punishment of Israel, preparatory to bringing her into her destined place in the earth. Therefore our eyes also must be fixed throughout this vision and its interpretation upon days yet to come,—the "last days" of the Times of the Gentiles.

1. INTERPRETATION PROPER, vss. 20-25.

This part falls into two well-defined sections. The first one is general; the second, which is the one of main consequence, to which the former serves as a necessary approach, is specific and detailed.

(a) Medo-Persia and Greece, vss. 20-22.

20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

MEDO-PERSIA.—It sufficed merely to designate to Daniel the two powers of his day which, in combination as a dual monarchy, were next to rule the imperial world after the impending fall of Babylon. These two kingdoms lying eastward from Babylon were already thundering at her gates; and, if our previous conjecture be correct, the end arrived in this same "third year of the reign of king Belshazzar." Darius, the Median, first reigned two years; after his death the sce-

ter passed to Cyrus, the Persian; thereafter Persia remained the horn that “was higher than the other.” According to verse 4 these joint powers overcame three great realms—Babylon, Lydia and Egypt—besides all lesser powers included within the Babylonian Empire. Indeed, the second empire became greater in territory than the first.

GREECE.—This is the first prophecy which reveals that Greece was to gain imperial ascendancy. It is here shown that she was to be the third member of the image, the third of the four beasts. Even in Daniel’s day Greece was a great power on the western horizon, never yet included in the imperial world. She had epochs of overflow into adjacent regions, partly through pressure from invading streams and partly from colonizing her congested inhabitants. Still, so far from her giving indication at this time of rising to imperial sway, she had already lost her provinces in Asia Minor to Croesus, the king of Lydia.

The “notable horn” of the “he-goat,” whose conquest of the eastern empire filled so large a place in the second stage of the vision (verses 5-8), is explained to Daniel to be “the first king.” This is the conqueror so well known to history as Alexander the Great. In the vision this horn is no sooner become “strong,” i. e., dominant over all, than it was broken off, and four “notable ones” came up in its room “toward the four winds of heaven.” From the interpretation we learn that this means the partition of the empire of Alexander into four kingdoms constituting the eastern,

western, northern and southern quarters of the same, which history is familiar with as the kingdoms of Chaldea, Greece, Syria and Egypt. It is noted that this was a weaker form of the Grecian Empire.

(b) The King of Fierce Countenance, vss. 23-25.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

THE TIME GUIDE.—Now that we are brought to the main matter of the vision, the importance of the time-data which the angel gave to Daniel in his introductory statements becomes apparent.

Owing to the fact that the little horn was seen to spring from one of the “four notable ones” which succeeded the “great horn,” we would naturally look for this “king of fierce countenance” in the past days of the four kingdoms of the Grecian Empire, especially for some king who greatly horrified and afflicted the Jews. And such a personage seems to be found in Antiochus Epiphanes, a king of Syria. His doings of cruelty and sacrilege in the Holy Land are writ large in the annals

of both Jewish and Gentile history. If we did not examine the case closely, we would be disposed to hold tenaciously to the application of this vision to him.

But the language of the vision in various parts fails altogether to apply to Antiochus Epiphanes. History records no conquest on his part "toward the east," as verse 9 demands; Antiochus did not "magnify himself against the Prince of the host"; the "place of His sanctuary" was not cast down by Antiochus in the sense evidently intended in the vision; neither were "both the sanctuary and the host . . . trodden under foot" by him for "two thousand and three hundred days," i. e., six years, four months and twenty days. Indeed, so far from "the host being given up" (Leeser) to him, and that "by reason of transgression" (Leeser), the Jews, although subjected to fiercest and most persistent pressure, nevertheless successfully withstood Antiochus, showing that they had God's favor and support; and they won for themselves under the Maccabees the greatest independence and prosperity that they have ever had since the fall of the kingdom in 587 B. C.

But the interpreting angel had carefully fortified Daniel's mind against looking for this "king of fierce countenance" and for his practices before "the time of the end," or "the last end of the indignation." And the language of the interpretation at this vital point puts the matter beyond dispute or uncertainty. "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the

full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up," verse 23. The time of Antiochus was in the former time of those kingdoms. His day was not even in the latter time of the old Grecian Empire; for he came to his end more than one hundred years before the Grecian Empire ended.

The simple solution is that those four kingdoms are to have "a latter time"; i. e., they are to be again represented territorially as four kingdoms in the last days of the Times of the Gentiles. And out of one of them—the final Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, or Greece—this great destroyer of God's Israel is to appear. That it is not to be out of the Chaldean or the Egyptian quarter is clear from the description of his conquest of those regions (vs. 9). And the expression, "toward the pleasant land," would go far to imply that he will not arise in Syria, but in Greece.

Equally important is it to notice the expression, "when the transgressors have come to the full"—"when the transgressors have filled the measure of their guilt" (Leeser). Taken together with the expression, "by reason of transgression" (vs. 12), and the statement of the angel, "I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation" (vs. 19), we cannot fail to see that we are being shown that this is the king of the last days by whom God will finish the outpouring of His indignation upon the finally and pre-eminently impenitent transgressors of His people Israel.

THE APOSTATE JEWS' ANTI-MESSIAH.—Note

the unparalleled, mysterious might of this king: "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power" (vs. 24). This means super-human power, and it can be none other than Satan's. Later Scriptures emphasize and confirm this. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness" (2 Thess. 2: 9, 10). "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13: 2). This power is represented by the interpreting angel as being used to "destroy wonderfully"—not only generally, but in particular to "destroy the mighty and the holy people," the Jews (vs. 24). Verse 25 goes on to explain how he shall accomplish his malignant ends by diabolical diplomacy, craftiness, self-exaltation and deception. His rank effrontery is described as rising to the degree of defying the Prince of princes to come into His own. These traits and practices are often reiterated in later testimonies of God's Word; e. g., Matt. 24: 21, 22; Rev. 13: 5, 7. Leeser translates the latter part of verse 23, "there will arise a king of impudent face, and understanding deep schemes."

"But he shall be broken without hand," i. e., "without a human hand" (Leeser). "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thes. 2: 8). He "goeth into perdition" (Rev. 17: 11). "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles

before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19: 20).

2. CONFIRMATION OF SPECIAL VISION, vs. 26.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

This verse refers entirely to what was told Daniel in verse 14. The rendering of the R. V. makes this clear: "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred *evenings and mornings*; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (vs. 14). "And the vision of the *evenings and mornings* which hath been told is true: but shut thou up the vision: for it belongeth to many days to come" (vs. 26). The interpretation of the main vision closed with the Antichrist's end (vs. 25). Verse 26 adds only that what had been told as to the length of time from the giving over of sanctuary and people to the full vengeance of the Antichrist unto the cleansing, or vindication, of the sanctuary—six years, four months and twenty days—is true; but that it is to be shut up from fulfilment for "many days to come."

CONCLUSION—Vs. 27.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Here again, we see a man who had a personal sympathy with all these disclosures of the woes coming to his transgressing people. It is a sympathy so keen and almost crushing as to call upon us also to regard the disclosures with heartfelt awe and humility. Daniel's last words, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it," might confuse us at first; as though the vision had been left unintelligible, at least to all but himself. But we may construe it that none understood why he should be so affected. It can be easily understood from Leeser's translation: "I was depressed because of the appearance: but no one observed it." This harmonizes with the previous words, "I rose up, and did the king's business."

What profound revelations of both the immediate and the far distant future Daniel carried locked up in his bosom as he faithfully continued to fulfil his duties of State at Belshazzar's corrupt and tottering court! With what a vision he looked about upon captive, dispersed Israel! What solemn effect these things are calculated to produce upon our hearts and minds as we look upon that imperial territory under its present conditions [1914-1917]: flooded with rivers of blood; insensate with the frenzy of reckless, ruthless ambition; Jew pitted at bayonet's point against Jew—all for naught to them but as a part of "the indignation"! How thankful we should be for the "light in a dark place" like this!

We conclude the chapter by lining up its vision with the previous distinctive portions of the com-

posite revelation of this book of increasing wonders. As we have already remarked, Nebuchadnezzar's dream was given to disclose the coming of the kingdom of heaven upon earth in succession to the Times of the Gentiles—the times of Gentile supremacy over transgressing, disowned Israel. Daniel's first vision, that of the four beasts, was given to show that that earthly theocracy was to be, of all the nations of the earth, the exclusive, direct inheritance of Israel—when her Messiah, the Son of Man, should come into world-wide dominion. This last vision was given, as we have now seen, to show through what final tribulation at the hands of the “little horn” (the same in both chapters, 7 and 8) the Jews should at last be brought into the kingdom.

IX

VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

THE FAITHFUL WATCHMAN.—Darius began to reign in 538 B. C. His “first year” would run well over into 537 B. C. Daniel was then about 88 years old probably. We should remember that Darius had given him the highest place in the government as President of the Triumvirate under which the princes of all the one hundred and twenty provinces were subordinated. Darius, we also remember, had it in mind to make Daniel exclusive Minister of State. The incident of the lions’ den may have already occurred. What a time of crowded, critical concerns and events! Yet, notwithstanding his high position, his great responsibility and pressing duties—duties so promptly, conscientiously and efficiently performed that the most envious enemies could ferret out no delinquency or defect—yea, in spite of extreme peril to his position and to his person, Daniel swerved not from consistently seeking first the

kingdom of God and His righteousness. Prayer was his first business. Thrice daily he repaired to his chamber for worship and supplication, with his windows open toward Jerusalem. From every fresh perusal of Scripture he looked Jerusalem-ward and directed his prayer unto God. This made him a “man of his times” in the only true sense, which is that of a man who regards and serves his times from the heavenly and the dispensational standpoint. And it was just this that made him the best kind of man of daily affairs.

Now, to this watchman most important “signs of the times” were appearing in swift succession and in accumulating number and impressiveness. Babylon had already fallen and her stubborn grasp of the Jews was broken. Down to the most minute particulars extended prophecies were fulfilled in this great event. The Medes, whom prophecy had expressly named as the destroyers of Babylon, now held the imperial scepter. Prophecy related these mutations of imperial history to the return of the Jews from the seventy years’ captivity. This was the eve of the seventieth year. Moreover, Cyrus, who so ably commanded the allied armies of Medes and Persians in overthrowing Babylon, was the very one who, as God had by name foretold through Isaiah (44: 29; 45: 1), should release the exiles.

THE CALL TO PRAYER.—“Watch and pray” is God’s rule always. The appearing of the striking signs of a predicted event, so far from leading the watchful servant of God to assume that the event

will automatically transpire without prayer to heaven, calls him to the more extraordinary engagement in prayer. God's promises are not only not automatic in fulfilment, they are not even unconditional. The exiling of the Jews was for causes explicitly stated by God; it was effected at His appointed time and by His chosen instruments; it was ordained by Him for a definite duration and purpose. Likewise, the restoration was contemplated and predicted by God from the beginning; the conditions, political, instrumental and spiritual which should bring it about, were foreknown and foreshown by Him. Divine testimony on these points is illustrated by the following citations from Isaiah and Jeremiah:

Who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger.—Is. 42: 24, 25.

Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.—Is. 43: 14, 15.

For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.—Is. 48: 9-11.

Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him: and

last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.—Jer. 49: 17-20.

But God's law of working out His ways is thus expressed in Ezekiel 36: 37:

Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

Therefore, penitent supplication was to be a necessary spiritual condition of restoration from Babylonian exile. See Jeremiah 50: 4, 5, 20:

In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Now Daniel was the last man to be slack in these prayer-laws of His God.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him; 10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14 Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned and done wickedly. 16 O

Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

DANIEL'S PRAYER OF IMPORTUNITY.—Daniel was led to this prayer by the signs of the times in the light of God's Word; and certainly Daniel's prayer was itself the most striking spiritual sign of that time of impending restoration.

DANIEL'S IMPORTUNITY.—This was shown by the manner as well as the matter of his prayer. Every word of verse 3 impressively testifies to this. See this aged and experienced intercessor and prayer-warrior setting his face unto the Lord! “Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray.” “To seek.” “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” is the Lord's challenge to this determined approach. Then, four degrees of progressive intensity are indicated by—“prayer” (general address), “supplications” (pressing entreaties), “with fasting” (letting go of physical necessities), “and sackcloth, and ashes” (expressing utter unworthiness and need).

DANIEL'S CONFESSION.—He ascribed to God supreme greatness and perfect fidelity to His covenant of mercy toward the obedient (vs. 4); and he made confession of his people's extreme contrariness toward God and His Word (vs. 5), and toward the prophets (vs. 6). He acknowledged the ill-desert of all classes (vss. 7, 8) in flouting God's longsufferings (vss. 9, 10) and in compelling Him to pour out upon them the curse which He had long before threatened (vss. 11-14). The full force of this confession can be felt only by a fresh reading of the Mosaic Scriptures to which Daniel refers, especially Lev. 26 and Deut. 28-30. A few fragments as samples may be quoted:

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. and do them; . . . I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; . . . I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. . . . And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.—Lev. 26: 3, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 38, 44.

And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou

goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.—Deut. 28: 63, 64.

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. . . . I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou makest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.—Deut. 30: 1, 2, 3, 19, 20.

DANIEL'S SUPPLICATION.—Upon concluding his confession (vs. 15), Daniel makes his people's awful misery the basis of fervent, effectual appeal to God for righteous relenting of anger and for the return of His smile (vss. 16, 17). Waiving all consideration of "our righteousness," he moves upon the divine reason and feeling by pleading—"Thy city Jerusalem"; "Thy holy mountain"; "Thy sanctuary"; "the city which is called by Thy name"; "Thy city and Thy people—called by Thy Name"; "Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us"; "For the Lord's

sake"; "Incline thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold"; "O Lord, hear; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God."

20 And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God: 21 Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

THE APPEARING OF GABRIEL TO DANIEL.—While Daniel was still engaged in his extraordinary exercises of prayer, confession and supplication, the angel Gabriel came nigh to him at about the ninth hour of the day (three o'clock), the time so sacred as the hour of the evening burnt offering in the temple. Special remark is made upon the angel's arrival by a swift flight. Notice in passing that he is called "the man Gabriel." In 8:15, 16 likewise, the appearance and the voice of the celestial person there introduced are described as human. It is commonly represented in Scripture that angels, when they appear to men, do so in human likeness.

The language of verse 21, "Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning," excites

the question whether reference is made to the appearance of Gabriel to Daniel which is recorded in chapter 8, or whether it is implied that Daniel had had a vision at the beginning of this prayer-season, in which vision Gabriel had been seen by him. Certainly the language itself entirely favors the latter explanation. This is strongly corroborated by Gabriel's own words to Daniel in verses 22, 23 —especially the last words of verse 23: "Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision," or "Consider the matter and understand the vision" (R. V.). The words "Understand the vision" clearly refer to what immediately follows in the last verses of the chapter. It seems clear, then, that when Daniel began this waiting upon God in such an extraordinary way a new vision appeared to him, of which the paragraph consisting of verses 24-27 and relating to the "Seventy Weeks" is the interpretation. The vision itself is not described. It seems to have disappeared, while Daniel went on to accomplish his work of confession and of entreating God to cause His face to shine anew upon His sanctuary. Gabriel states, however, that the divine message which he had flown so swiftly to bring to Daniel had been given when Daniel first began his supplications.

There is much force in the language of verse 22, especially as rendered by the R. V.: "And he instructed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to make thee skilful of understanding," or "intelligent with under-

standing" (Leeser). The point apparently is that Daniel, even Daniel, and he with all the aid of existing prophecies—even with Jeremiah's explicit prediction that the Lord "would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem"—was still interceding before God in his people's interest with seriously imperfect understanding. This very time, when the restoration from the plainly predicted seventy years' Babylonian captivity was almost due, was just the hour for a similar chronological disclosure of great epochs and time-measurements in Jewish history yet to transpire, before the perfect restoration and consummation for which Daniel sighed could be realized.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

THE DISCLOSURE OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.—This new chronological forecast of Jewish history was evidently projected upon the back-ground of the initial period of the Times of the Gentiles—the Seventy Years' Captivity with which Daniel was being so deeply occupied. The emphasis of the opening words of verse 24 is to be drawn from the contrast between the epoch then just expiring and the epochs yet to come before all that Daniel may have been including in his fervent supplications could be brought to pass. As if Gabriel had said: "Not, O Daniel, these seventy years, but yet

seventy weeks of years are determined" etc. The term "weeks" is simply a sacred multiplier to seventy as the multiplicand already familiar; as if Gabriel had said seventy sevens of years, or seven times seventy years. Here is as definite a forecast of 490 remaining years as was Jeremiah's prediction of the seventy years just closing. We are to treat the one just as literally as we are accustomed to treat the other.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.—The cluster of happy consummations listed in verse 24 constitutes the *new distinctive portion of the composite revelation of the book*. Let us paraphrase the verse. "Seven times seventy years more are pre-determined of God, O Daniel, upon thy people, the Jews, and upon thy city, Jerusalem: to bring Israel to the close of her career of stiff-necked transgression; to effect an ending of all her besetting sins; to purge out of her effectually her 'bent to backsliding'; to bring all her children into everlasting righteousness; to fulfil exhaustively all the contents of vision and prophecy relative to her ultimate restoration; and to anoint the Most Holy Place of her final and inviolable worship."

This to Daniel was certainly all that his heart panted after, the "exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Yet it was no more than "vision and prophecy" had already promised, only all had not been anywhere summarized so comprehensively and strikingly. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, as well as David, scin-

tillate with flashes of this coming light of stainless purity and glory. A few samples may be cited.

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. . . . For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. . . . And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.—Is. 60: 21; 61: 11; 62: 2, 12.

For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. . . . And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.—Jer. 30: 17; 31: 14, 23, 33, 34.

And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.—Ezek. 36: 23-28; 37: 27, 28.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.—Ps. 92: 5.

INCREASING LIGHT.—Let us take note of the progress of light thus far. God revealed by Nebuchadnezzar's dream that the Times of the Gentiles in their supremacy over His Israel are to be cut short forever by the sudden arrival of the Stone-kingdom, the Stone of Israel's kingdom—the everlasting kingdom from heaven. The vision of the four beasts brought to light that the saints of Israel are to stand in this kingdom from above as the paramount people of the earth; for their King, the Most High Son of Man, shall be worshipped and obeyed by all earthly govern-

ments. The vision of the ram and the he-goat threw upon this glowing canvas of the last days the lurid cloud of the supreme tribulation of "the mighty and the holy people," which tribulation shall be executed by the Antichrist as the agent of "the last end of the indignation" of God, "when the transgressors are come to the full." THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS NOW SHEDS FORTH THE "LIGHT AFTER DARKNESS," THE MERIDIAN EFFULGENCE OF SPIRITUAL CONSUMMATIONS, IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS WHICH SHALL MORE SIGNALLY CHARACTERIZE RESTORED ISRAEL THAN HER FORMER FLAGRANT INIQUITIES EVER DID.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

OUTLINE OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.—The fact is at once apparent that the seventy weeks do not cover the entire time consecutively from the date of the vision to the terminal point designated in

verse 24. This will be the more apparent as we take up the outline in its successive portions.

THE STARTING POINT.—To Daniel the “going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem” (vs. 23) was a matter for future identification, when the event itself should occur. From our standpoint it becomes a matter of careful identification of the right one among several imperial decrees of past history.

We first need carefully to notice the exact import of the decree itself. It was a “commandment.” This means an imperial decree, as we have already called it. The object of the edict was “to restore and to build Jerusalem.” This is purely a material and political object, with no religious feature indicated. The last part of verse 25 clearly relates to this rebuilding: “The street shall be built again, and the wall.” This indicates both interior reconstruction as a well-ordered city and outward provision of defense. In fine, it indicates the restoration of Jerusalem to the condition of an independent national and political capital. And the final expression, “even in troublous times,” implies that such a rehabilitation of Jerusalem would meet with bitter opposition from interested enemies. Let us seek for the imperial decree which answers to this description precisely.

THE EDICT OF CYRUS.—In the year 536 B. C., Cyrus the Persian, at once upon taking the throne of the new Medo-Persian Empire, issued a decree of liberation to all Jews within the Empire, that

they might return to Jerusalem. The record is found in Ezra 1: 1-3.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

We see that this decree was confined to the building of "the house of the Lord God of Israel." Cyrus authorized nothing more, he claimed to be charged by God to do nothing more, and the subsequent record shows that the returning exiles attempted nothing more. See Ezra 6: 15. This cannot, then, be the decree that we are looking for.

THE FIRST DECREE OF ARTAXERXES.—The next imperial decree in historical order was that authorizing Ezra to go up to Jerusalem on important business. This is found recorded in Ezra 7; and it was given to Ezra "in the seventh year of the king," Artaxerxes (vs. 8). Artaxerxes reigned over the Persian Empire from 465 to 424 B. C. His "seventh year" was 458 B. C., just 78 years from the time when the first immigration of exiles came to Jerusalem. Is this the decree that we are looking for?

In the first place, we notice that Ezra was a

purely religious character. He was “a ready scribe in the law of Moses” (vs. 6) and is described in verse 11 as “Ezra the priest, the scribe, even the scribe of the words of the commandment of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel.” The burden upon his heart is described in verse 10: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” He was not, then, the man, by profession or by the calling of God in his heart, for such a building of Jerusalem as the case before us requires.

Moreover, the terms of the king’s commission to Ezra relate exclusively to such business as accorded with Ezra’s character and calling. He was authorized to assemble and conduct all who were “minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem,” verse 13. He was entrusted with liberal offerings of silver and gold “from the king and his counsellors,” besides all that he could “find in all the province of Babylon,” together “with the freewill offering of the people and of the priests” (vss. 15, 16). But all this was a freewill offering “for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem;” “that thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem” (vss. 16, 17). He was also to take along vessels given him “for the service of the house of thy God” (vs. 19). The king also ordered his treasurers in the provinces west of the

Euphrates to give Ezra whatever assistance he required "for the house of the God of heaven" (vss. 21-23). Ezra was also authorized to exempt all "ministers of this house of God" from "toll, tribute, or custom" (vs. 24). Ezra was empowered to install in magisterial and judicial office "all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not" (vs. 25). Finally he was given right to put all the provisions of the decree into force at the penalty for refusal of "death, . . . banishment, . . . confiscation of goods, . . . or imprisonment" (vs. 26).

There is nothing whatever in this decree to identify it with the one that we are looking for. This decree pertained altogether to the perfecting of the religious system, that of worship and of jurisprudence, at Jerusalem. And Ezra's words of thanksgiving to God for prospering his undertaking fully confirm this: "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to *beautify the house of the Lord* which is in Jerusalem" (vs. 27).

THE SECOND DECREE OF ARTAXERXES.—The third decree with which we are concerned is that given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign, which would be in the year 445 B. C. The account is recorded in Nehemiah 1 and 2. What is essential to us just here is contained in 2: 4-8.

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I

said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father's sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

We cannot fail to be impressed at once that here we find the required imperial firman. There is nothing in it of the religious character which exclusively characterizes the other two; but it is exclusively of an engineering and political character, which is wholly wanting in the others. It is just this character—this character exclusively—that is required to fit the case. The whole story of the building of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah agrees with this character of the decree. As an engineering work, the story is too familiar to require our further attention. But in its political aspect we need to give it close scrutiny.

That Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem was of political purpose can be shown convincingly by numerous évidences. We note, first, the fact that Nehemiah was himself a very high official of the empire, occupying the position of king's cupbearer

—the position of closest intimacy with the king and of the king's highest trust. Then, Nehemiah's journey up to Jerusalem was under an imposing escort from the king, of "captains of the army and horsemen" (2: 9). Again, a certain neighboring government official, "Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite," were "grieved . . . exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel," verse 10. Again, upon arriving at Jerusalem, after privately viewing the situation by night, Nehemiah assembled the priests, nobles and rulers and laid before them the proposition, "Let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach" (vs. 17). Forthwith the political enemies before mentioned, with "Geshem the Arabian," scornfully inquired, "What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" (vs. 19). After the building operations had actually begun, Sanballat, when he heard thereof, was "wroth, and took great indignation;" and he "spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves?" (4: 1, 2). When the circuit of the wall was reared one half in height, a still more formidable conspiracy of enemies sought to hinder further building by armed force, but they were circumvented in their purpose.

All this goes to show that the enterprise was intended to be of an acknowledged political character, and that it was so understood. Accordingly

when the wall was finished Nehemiah proceeded to set everything in strong defensive order outwardly and in strong governmental order inwardly. It belonged thereto, not only to have the city well populated and thoroughly officered, but also to revive and reform the people thoroughly according to the laws of Moses. And Nehemiah took twelve years away from the Persian court to establish and govern Jerusalem as a city of political autonomy.

For a just comprehension of this political starting-point of the reckoning of the seventy weeks of Daniel, we need to give special attention to the situation existing at Jerusalem which urged Nehemiah to his great undertaking. This situation is introduced in the opening words of his book (1: 1-4).

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.

We need to remember that this was not less than ninety years after the Jews returned from Baby-

lon; also that it was thirteen years after this same Artaxerxes had commissioned Ezra to go up to Jerusalem. Is the description here given of Jerusalem's condition indicative of what had existed all these years? Certainly not! Nehemiah inquired for news, not for an old story: "I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped." Escaped what, and when? Certainly not escaped from Babylon 90 years before. That was not an escape at all; it was a free and honorable emigration. "Which were left of the captivity." The emphasis is to be placed upon the word "left." These are further described as "the remnant that are left."

It is clear that some great tragedy had recently occurred, by which many Jews in Jerusalem had perished and from which only a remnant had escaped—which remnant Hanani told Nehemiah was in abject misery and reproach. Likewise the walls and gates of the city which had served for nearly a century of peace, had by some extraordinary catastrophe been left wrecked and charred. And it was just because the Jews, after so long a time of immunity, were still left exposed to such a tragedy, that Nehemiah's heart was stirred to the great effort of making Jerusalem strong externally and internally for self-defense, as well as honorable and influential before all peoples.

Can we get nearer to the truth of this crucial episode in Jewish history? The Holy Spirit has left to the watchful eye a clue to this inquiry in the first citation which we made from Nehemiah.

In 2: 6 occur the words, "the queen also sitting by him." This parenthetical statement evidently implies that this queen's presence turned the psychological moment to Nehemiah's account. It was her pleading eye and nod of approval that carried the day: "So it pleased the king to send me." This, however, only deepens the mystery and intensifies our sympathetic curiosity. Who was this queen?

It is generally held that the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther was the Persian monarch Xerxes, who reigned 485-465 B. C., and who was the father of this Artaxerxes. The name "Ahasuerus" is purely official and not personal; so that it is equally applicable to Artaxerxes. Now there is no certain proof that Esther was the wife of Xerxes. The strongest reason for preferring him is because of his fabulous wealth, which might be thought to be reflected in the lavish feast of 180 days' duration described in the first chapter of Esther. This, however, is not at all conclusive. Display and extravagance are not always proofs of corresponding wealth. And what was more likely than that the young king, having succeeded to his father's kingdom and wealth, should celebrate the morning of his reign by instituting, "in the third year," such a lavish display?

Strong evidences are not wanting that the king of the book of Esther was this Artaxerxes. (We say "this Artaxerxes," because there was another Artaxerxes of Scripture, mentioned in Ezra 4: 7, otherwise known in history as Pseudo-Smerdis.)

The following paragraph is to be found in "Universal History on Scriptural Principles," page 100 (Samuel Baxter and Sons, London, 1844): "Artaxerxes was surnamed Longimanus on account of his arms; for it is said that his hands touched his knees when he was standing. The Persian historians called this king Ardeshir [a variation of the name Artaxerxes] Dirazdest, or long-handed; and they say that he married a beautiful damsel, named Esther, whom he found among the Jewish captives." This appears to be reliable historical evidence that Artaxerxes Longimanus of the book of Nehemiah is the king Ahasuerus of the book of Esther.

With this supposition all of the chronological and historical data involved nicely harmonize. Esther became the queen in the Jewish month Tebeth of the seventh year of Ahasuerus' reign (Esther 2: 16). This would be very early in the civil year, 458 B. C. That was the year in which Ezra went up to Jerusalem—only he left two months later (Ez. 7: 8). Esther was not yet known to the king as one of Ezra's people; yet not unlikely she had much to do with her new spouse's favor toward Ezra. At any rate the coincidence in God's providence just here is beautiful and significant. Five years later, in 453 B. C., Haman had got his plot well under way, not only against Mordecai, the foster cousin of Esther (Esther 2: 7), but also against Mordecai's whole race, the Jews (3: 6). For, in the Jewish first month of that year, "the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus,"

Haman began to cast lots for a suitable day for the destruction of the Jewish race (3: 7). Not until the twelfth month (Jewish), or about March of 452 B. C., did he find the fateful day. The day appointed "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day," was the "thirteenth day of the [Jewish] twelfth month" following, i. e., of the year 451 B. C. (3: 12, 13).

It was then that Mordecai procured the intervention of Queen Esther at the risk of her life. God favored her courageous step of faith, and He brought Haman to the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai and placed the latter in the seat of power vacated by the former. Again the beautiful and beloved queen approached the monarch—not, however, in queenly attire and posture, but in all the attitude of a broken-hearted woman and Jewess. She pleaded with Ahasuerus to avert the tragedy which still awaited her people because of the irrevocable decree which the king had authorized Haman to send throughout the empire. To this appeal the king consented to the utmost degree possible. He could not revoke the former decree; but he caused a new decree to be issued, which authorized the Jews to stand for their lives against their enemies when that momentous day should arrive. This counter-decree was issued in the third Jewish month of 452 B. C. (8: 9). The Jews were empowered to exterminate and despoil those who attacked them as freely as Haman's decree authorized the enemies

of the Jews to do to them (8: 11, 12). The effect of this new decree was electric: "And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor" (8: 15, 16).

On the appointed day a severe civil conflict occurred throughout the Persian realm of 127 provinces—"from India even unto Ethiopia." The Jews were assaulted with deadly hatred and murderous intent, but they everywhere had victory over their foes. The story is recounted in Esther 9: 1-10. How fierce the struggle was is indicated by the large numbers slain by the Jews in the capital city itself (vs. 15). Throughout the provinces they slew no less than 75,000 men. What a simple and obvious conclusion it is, to see in the deplorable condition of Jerusalem, described in Neh. 1: 1-3, the result of the struggle in that city,—the one place of all where such enemies as Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem would make their most violent assault. That any Jews were left at all, that Jerusalem still stood in any condition short of being a heap of ashes and of charred bones, was due to successful, although desperate, resistance. No wonder that Nehemiah, after being told what pathetic evidences of that fearful struggle still remained six years later, was stirred to his noble effort to bring Jerusalem into an adequate state of defense and of acknowledged autonomy!

It seems to be justifiable to devote so much care to establishing the historical event and the nature

of the event which constitutes the basis of the reckoning of the seventy weeks. After nearly a century and a half of national disorganization, the Jews were once more granted by imperial authority the right, and were by Nehemiah's work placed in the condition, of self-government and self-defense. Although not permitted to become again an independent kingdom, yet they were officially recognized as a Jewish State, religious in basis, but with large political privilege. And it is just this Jewish State, the career of which is outlined by the Vision of the Seventy Weeks.

THE SEVEN WEEKS, AND THE SIXTY AND Two WEEKS.—In verse 25 a continuous stretch of 69 of the 70 sevens of years is marked off, amounting to 483 years. A division into 7 plus 62 sevens of years is indicated. What important event was to constitute this way-mark is not intimated. But it is noteworthy that 49 sacred years (of 360 days to the year) will cover the time exactly from B. C. 445, when the decree of Artaxerxes was issued, to the close of Hebrew prophecy and of the Old Testament canon in Malachi. It seems very appropriate to suppose that this is what was secretly intimated by the demarcation of the seven weeks.

It must be clear to every one that the further 62 weeks terminate upon Christ in His first advent. The terms "Messiah, the Prince" will bear no other reasonable construction. These two titles belong to our Lord in His specific relation to the Jewish State. The term "Messiah" means the Anointed; the term "Prince," the King. *As the*

Anointed King of the Jews He is the objective of the 483 years.

But the precision which evidently characterizes the chronology of the Seventy Weeks, the exactness with which all prophetic times are fulfilled, calls for an exact time-ending of the 62 weeks. Unless we look for a day when 483 sacred years of 360 days to the year exactly terminate, we will be taking God's inerrant prophetic word at our own loose pleasure. It is not a difficult or uncertain matter for us, in looking back, to descry the very day which alone fulfils the description of the terminal point of the 483 years. There was one day, and one only, in all Christ's life and ministry on which He offered Himself to the Jewish State as the promised Messiah and Prince. We refer to the Sabbath day on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King according to the exact manner required by the Hebrew prophecies. All four Evangelists relate the event fully. We present Matthew's account (21: 1-11):

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them to me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and

brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come to Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

This was the fourth day before the crucifixion.

Now the passover lamb had to be slain toward evening on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year, the month Nisan; and the lamb must be eaten that night, which would be the beginning of the fifteenth day. But four days before being killed (which would be the fifth day before being eaten), i. e., the tenth day, the lamb must be selected from the flock and taken into keeping until slain. Now it was in the evening beginning the tenth day of Nisan that Jesus was selected as the Lamb of God and by Mary's act of anointing Him consecrated "unto burial." On the morning of the tenth day He rode into Jerusalem as King; but He was rejected as such by the authorities, who thereby in hatred determined His death as the Lamb of God to be slain for their sins.

Can the exact termini of the 483 years be fixed? We think that they can, at least with reasonable certainty. We have already seen that Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah that important political firman in the year 445 B. C., the twentieth year of Arta-

xerxes' reign. From Neh. 2: 1 we learn that the date was the month Nisan, the first month of the Jewish year. The day of the month is not stated. But the very omission indicates, according to the habit of the Scriptures, that it was the first day of the month, the Jewish New Year Day—a most appropriate day for such a providence. Now, starting with this date, it is found that 483 sacred years, of 360 days to the year, terminate precisely, to a day, on Palm Sabbath, the tenth of Nisan, of the year 32 A. D.—the very day when Jesus challenged the Jewish State by all prophetic signs to receive Him as “the Messiah, the Prince.”

THE GREAT PARENTHESIS.—Let us take verse 26 according to the Revised Version: “And after the three-score and two weeks shall the Anointed One be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war: desolations are determined.”

It is clear that, while this verse takes up the thread of events directly after the close of the 483 years, yet the remaining week of the seventy is not dealt with until verse 27. Consequently, verse 26 marks a parenthesis in the history of the Jewish State.

The four Gospels unitedly indicate that Jesus cut off the Jews from further national recognition as soon as they officially rejected His offer of Himself as their King. Appearing in Jerusalem the next day after that Sabbath, He cleansed the tem-

ple of the money-changers. Returning the day following, as His last public act He disowned the Jewish State indefinitely: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21: 43).

Two great events of supreme importance are assigned in verse 26 to this parenthetical time in Jewish history: the crucifixion of Jesus, which immediately occurred, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in 70 A. D., when the Roman arms under Titus besieged the city and, after incredible miseries to the Jews, captured it and reduced all to ashes. Jerusalem has never since been a Jewish city. After many years it was rebuilt as a pagan city. It gradually became Christian, especially after Constantine the Great. For a short time it was in Persian possession. In 637 it was taken by the Moslems. In 1099 the Crusaders wrested it away from infidel hands. But for seven and a quarter centuries it has been Moslem only.

THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME.—It is very important to notice, that verse 26 represents that the city and the sanctuary were to be destroyed by the people of a coming prince. Of course this cannot be "the Messiah, the Prince." And yet it is evidently a coming prince over the Jews. The connection of thought demands this. The prince himself was not to destroy the city and the temple, but the people of the prince yet to come was to do this. The revelation, then, is that, of the people

who should destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple—which, as we have mentioned, was done by the arms of the Roman Empire in 70 A. D.—a coming head shall be prince of the Jewish State in the place of the rejected Prince of the Jews, their Messiah. In other words, the Jewish State, which was renounced on Palm Sabbath by Jesus owing to their rejection of Him as “Messiah, the Prince,” was by His act of authority suspended from further existence and history until it shall be reconstituted as such by an Anti-Prince, the Anti-christ.

It is at first perplexing to trace the thought of the third and last section of verse 26, beginning with “And the end thereof shall be with a flood.” The opening words of verse 27, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week,” must refer back to “the prince that shall come.” But, using here the pronoun “he,” instead of repeating the noun “the prince,” implies that no principal subject of mention has intervened, although, at first thought, the adverb “thereof” would be taken to refer to the city and the sanctuary. We are forced, therefore, to connect this adverb with “the prince,” and to understand that the sentence means that the end of this coming Anti-Messiah will be with a flood. Leeser translates it, “But his end will come in a violent overthrow.”

The next words, “And even unto the end shall be war,” would then mean “unto the end” of this prince. That is to say, this prince’s end is to be

by an awful catastrophe arresting him in the midst of a war upon Israel. It is added, "desolations are determined." This indicates, no doubt, the unparalleled effects of the war upon the Holy Land.

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK.—In taking up verse 27, it is well for us again to have also before our eyes the language of the R. V.: "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate: and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate."

This verse evidently rounds out what we have found intimated in verse 26. This "week" constitutes the seven of the 490 years, which were still left to be made up after the arrival of "Messiah, the Prince." An indefinite interval interrupts the continuance of the Jewish State after His rejection. Verse 26 intimated to us that, before the true Messiah again appears to become King of the Jews, another prince, an Anti-Messiah, shall lord it over them and shall wage a war of utmost devastation against them until he is suddenly engulfed in an awful cataclysm. Verse 27 now informs us that the Jews will regain Statehood for this period of the last seven years by virtue of a strong political convention with this final Roman Emperor. The "many" who enter into this "covenant of death," this "agreement with hell," who hide under this "refuge of lies" (Isa. 28: 18),

are to be understood as the general mass of apostate Jews of the last days.

The next words of verse 27 bring us upon familiar ground. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." This will leave $3\frac{1}{2}$ of the seven last years. This last half of the 7 years is the same as that designated in 7: 25: "And they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time"— $3\frac{1}{2}$ times, or years. In 7: 21 Daniel speaks of the war which he saw the horn waging against the saints with prevailing fury. And 7: 25 more fully describes the king's unrestrained defiance and sacrilege. This description agrees with that given in 9: 27 of the awful scourging of the Jews after their sacrifice and oblation are taken away; "For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate"—city, sanctuary, people—"even until the consummation, and that determined [by God's retributive decree] shall be poured upon the desolate"—Jewish State.

Readers will remember that in 8: 11 also the horn's act of taking away the daily sacrifice and casting down the sanctuary was seen by Daniel. Now we learn that that is to be done by the Anti-christ "in the midst of the week." For the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ years the Jews will enjoy immunity of worship under their treaty with Antichrist; but after that he will sweep away every vestige of religious liberty and for the remaining $3\frac{1}{2}$ years will mercilessly and defiantly scourge and devastate them. This picture is given even more graphically and

extendedly in Revelation. The conditions of the first half of the last seven years are depicted in Rev. 11: 1-13, those of the last half in 13: 5-8.

Readers will further remember that, according to Daniel 8: 13, 14, there are to be 2,300 days from the time of giving over the sanctuary and the people to be trodden under foot until the "sanctuary be cleansed," or "justified" (Marg.). The vindication, then, for the desecration of the sanctuary will overlap the last 3½ years of Anti-christ's reign by two years, ten months, and twenty days. It is reasonable for us to surmise that this will be the length of time required to build and consecrate the Millennial Temple according to Ezek. 40-44. This certainly would be a royal vindication of that indignity. According to 2 Thess. 2: 4 the "Man of Sin" will take his seat in the pre-millennial temple at Jerusalem (which the Jews in their impenitency will erect before their last great tribulation) and show himself "that he is God." How different the scene when the Lord of glory shall "anoint the most Holy" by His entrance into the Millennial Temple as described by Ezekiel, 43: 1-7:

Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east; and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the Lord came into the

house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile.

THE RENEWAL OF A HEBREW STATE in Palestine before the return of Christ, to suffer their final "great tribulation," has been touched upon (pp. 163-4). The order of this pre-tribulation restoration is described in Ezek. 38: 8: "In the latter years thou [the Antichrist] shalt come into the land that [1] is brought back from the sword, and [2] is gathered out of many people, . . . which . . . is [3] brought forth out of the nations, and [4] they shall dwell [for a time] safely all of them." Palestine has now been continuously for 800 years under the sword of Mohammed, and the Jews have been unable to return and rebuild themselves nationally. The most notable sign of the beginning of "the latter years" is, then, to appear when "the land—is brought back from the sword." While these lines are being written, —the last to be added to the revised manuscript—enlightened believers are breathlessly awaiting the tidings that the British flag has been unfurled over Jerusalem. Already the British government has officially and publicly declared for a new Jewish State in Palestine. This result will go far to throw prophetic light upon the divine purpose in the greatest of world-conflicts.

X

DANIEL'S LAST VISION

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

IMPORTANT OPENING STATEMENTS.—The date of this vision is to be reckoned from 536 B. C., when Cyrus took the throne of the Medo-Persian Empire. His “third year,” when Daniel received this revelation, would be 533 B. C., four years after the previous vision. Daniel’s age supposedly was 92 years. The truth of the matter is emphasized; also that the time for its fulfilment was very distant. The latter fact leads us already to expect to have given to us now the final portion of the composite revelation of the last days of the Times of the Gentiles.

It is also emphasized that Daniel was given clearly and fully to understand the vision. This implies that the whole matter was intelligible in advance of historical verification. It is well to emphasize once more this feature of prophecy. History stands related to prophecy, not as its elucidation or interpretation, but only as its verification. Prophecy throws light upon history, not

vice versa. “Historical interpretation of prophecy” always works mischief. Prophetic interpretation of history—is the divine and unerring guide to us. This makes prophecy “a light in a dark place,” not itself a dark mystery awaiting historical light for its elucidation. Inattention and unbelief, venturing to teach that God does not mean just what He says, or to “spiritualize” straightforward communications from God, will always leave Bible readers walking in ignorance of the signs of their times and capable of seeing the light of prophecy only after the need of that light has passed.

We have a striking illustration of this in John 12: 16: “These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.” Suppose that Jesus had taken the prophecies concerning Himself in any such way as we have been describing! He made prophecy the arbiter of the event. It is continually said that He did thus and so, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets.” Now if we take prophecy aright, we will be throwing true light forward into the womb of unborn events, and the creations of God’s providences will be coming forth as the children of that light.

The present application of the matter is this: if Daniel “understood the thing,” so that the understanding of the thing awaited nothing further, then we have our “understanding of the vision” by

Daniel's exposition of it. We do not perceive the sense of the vision by the light of what may now have been fulfilled, but we perceive what has been fulfilled by the light of the vision. Likewise, we are not left in perplexity and to cunning devices of "interpretation" where fulfilment has not yet come; but we have foresight of coming events through the prophecy itself which will be the only true interpretation of them. In other words, prophecy is altogether self-interpreting. The catching phrase, "History Unveiling Prophecy," puts the "candle" of prophecy "under a bushel."

2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

DANIEL'S GREAT BURDEN.—We can easily surmise what moved the aged saint to this supreme undertaking of prayer and fasting before God. The date of the vision helps us here. It was two years after the captives were released to return at their pleasure to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. It must have been a great surprise and disappointment, that so few from all the multitudes of the Twelve Tribes dwelling in all the empire availed themselves of this opportunity. The emigration of somewhat over forty thousand exiles represented but a disgraceful moiety of Judah, to say nothing of the vast multitudes of the Ten Tribes which had been much longer in captivity. Daniel had heard, doubtless, of the comparatively

mean proportions of the foundations of the new temple which had just been laid and dedicated. Probably he knew also of the alarming hindrances which malicious enemies were already interposing to the further progress of the work. Certainly his extreme exercises of self-denial and abasement betoken a most grievously burdened and perplexed spirit.

At this point the reader is requested to look carefully through the text to the end of the book, to see that the material falls into three parts which we need to take up separately: Part I, 10: 4—11: 1. Part II, 11: 2-35. Part III, 11: 36—12: 13. Part I is purely introductory; Part II is a foreground consisting of a span of history to begin comparatively soon after the date of the vision; Part III is clearly a vision of the last days. We will confine ourselves in the present chapter to Part I.

*Part 1—Introduction of Daniel's Last Vision,
10: 4—11: 1.*

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was beside the great river, which is Hiddekel; 5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this

great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then I was in a deep sleep upon my face, and my face toward the ground. 10 And behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. 11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. 15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. 16 And behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my Lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. 18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, 19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. 20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth:

and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

DANIEL'S CELESTIAL VISITANT.—The description of this celestial being which is given in verses 5, 6, and the effect produced by his appearance upon Daniel, would lead us at first to favor the idea that it was the Son of God appearing in human form. A closer study will prove this view to be untenable.

It will suffice to show that only one celestial person is to be seen in the entire chapter. Unquestionably it is the same person through verses 5-9. But that it is the same person appearing in verses 10-15 is evident from verse 11, where he refers back to the words mentioned in verse 9 as his own—those words of which Daniel then only heard the voice, but which the speaker of them now undertakes to strengthen Daniel to understand. And that it is still the same person in 10: 16—11: 1 is evident, because both in verses 12 and 14 and in verses 20, 21 he declares himself to be the messenger sent from God to make Daniel understand the vision.

Now that this person cannot be Christ is conclusive from the nature of his ministry. He repeatedly represents himself to be but a messenger sent to give Daniel intelligence in the vision, as in the three previous visions had been done. Then, we cannot conceive of Christ's being detained three weeks midway by "the prince of the kingdom

of Persia." Finally, the relation between this person and Michael as comrades and helpers to each other shows that this person is a fellow-angel, most likely Gabriel, who had before served as God's messenger to Daniel.

DANIEL'S PROSTRATIONS.—Overpowering effects of angelic apparitions upon human beings are familiar to a reader of Scripture. Still the present case is unusually marked. It is to be observed, however, that there was evidently far more disclosed to Daniel than appears upon the surface of the narrative. It is to be remembered that Daniel "set his heart to understand"—some deep problem relating to his people (vs. 12). That the solution of that problem was unfolded to him in a vision is apparent from the statement of verse 1 that Daniel "had understanding of the vision," and from the angel's statement in verse 14, "for yet the vision is for many days." Now, the long passage, 11: 2—12: 13, is not a vision, but the explanation of a vision. We see, therefore, that Daniel was being overpowered, after three weeks' travail in prayer with absolute fasting, not alone with the stunning appearance of an arch-angel, but also with an amazing celestial panorama of great future occurrences. His being marvellously strengthened by the angel is also something not unfamiliar to Bible readers. Our Saviour Himself was strengthened by angels (Matt. 4: 11; Lu. 22: 43).

FOCUS AND PURPORT OF THE VISION.—Of vital importance is it for us to follow closely the steps

of the angel in leading Daniel into the understanding of the vision. As in the vision of the ram and the he-goat the interpreter first impressed upon Daniel's mind that the vision to be interpreted related to the far-distant time of the end, so in this case, in verse 14 the angel, quite in advance of giving the explanation of the vision, acquaints Daniel with the fact that the vision was given to make known to him "what shall befall thy people in the latter days." It is added, "For yet the vision is for many days." This was intended to keep Daniel's eyes looking steadily forward during the angel's interpretation until the real focus was reached—the events to befall his people in the latter days. We need to have our minds adjusted to the same focus when we come to the angel's interpretation of the matter. Evidently the surmise already expressed is justified—that in this last vision we are to have brought to light the concluding portion of the composite revelation of the whole book on events of the latter days.

THEY FOUGHT FROM HEAVEN.—In various passages from Scripture, inklings are given us of a marvellous system of diplomacy and of strategic operations constantly in force in the skies, by which earthly affairs are vitally affected and controlled. The intrepid heroine Deborah, describing in her song of victory (Judges 5) how grandly her standards of faith and holy valor were supported by willing allies against Sisera, declares, "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." This is no mere

poetic conception; it is the literal truth. Earth and sky interlock in interest and in action.

When the base men of Sodom beset Lot's habitation with evil purpose against his mysterious guests, one of these angelic visitors in human form smote the mob with blindness, so that they wearied themselves in fruitless efforts to find the door. Elisha, when environed by the Syrian hosts at Dothan, assured his frightened servant: "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." He then prayed the Lord to open his servant's eyes that he might see the invisible host: "And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." At the critical moment of the approach of the Syrians Elisha calmly prayed the Lord to smite them with blindness. Those unseen defenders of the Lord's prophet used this terrible implement of warfare; and the prophet single-handed led the sightless multitude right into Samaria, the capital of Israel. Again, when Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, was on the point of destroying Jerusalem, in the days of the good king Hezekiah, we read, "The angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Is. 37: 36).

Many other instances of direct angelic intervention to deliver or to destroy might be cited from the Scriptures. But on the other hand, many hints are also given of interference in earthly

affairs by Satanic messengers and servants.

That is no myth which is given in Job, of Satan's accusation before God that this believer—of early times way back before Moses and outside the historic current of primeval faith—was devoted to God out of purely selfish, temporal interest. Awfully real was Satan's malicious delight in destroying, at God's permission, the flocks and the children of the uncomplaining saint, and in smiting Job with the worst form of leprosy, to test to the utmost his patience of faith. (While these things are ascribed to Satan, yet most likely they were executed by some of his willing minions, the invisible demons.) And in 1 Chron. 21: 1 we read: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." And when Ahab determined to get sanction from above for his ill-starred expedition against Syria, as recorded in 2 Chron. 18, the Lord, purposing to bring the wicked king to his fall, accepted the proffer of a spirit who said: "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." By this means Ahab the king was enticed to his ruin and death.

The New Testament abounds in testimony regarding most intimate attendance of godly spirits upon the heirs of salvation and regarding their most important ministries to them; and also regarding like intimate attendance and baleful ministrations of devilish spirits upon the ungodly, especially such as welcome the affinity of pretending angels of light. It is also taught that the

unseen evil spirits under Satan's directions greatly beset the believer, to seduce, to deceive, to do him harm physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Watchful and prayerful resistance to them needs to be exercised by the believer continually; and it is needful that, "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

Seeing that both these classes of unseen presences and agents approach men and operate in relation to them from the skies, it would not seem strange that two classes of beings—so opposite in nature, in purpose and in manner of action—should have mighty conflicts with each other in their common region of the skies. It seems to be natural to the case, that they should by such conflicts largely bring to decision beforehand what they respectively shall carry into effect in human affairs and interests. It is this aspect of the subject which is greatly illuminated by the portion of Daniel which we are now studying.

Daniel's awe-inspiring visitor assured him that "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words," i. e., in response to thy words. "But", the angel continued, "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withheld me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me: and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now [being no longer needed there, or having overcome with Michael's aid the opposition]

I am come to make thee understand" etc. Let us read verses 20, 21 also, together with 11: 1:

Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

The person called "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" was not Cyrus, the visible ruler of the empire, but a mighty unseen being having celestial principality over that great realm. Those called "the kings of Persia" were not the officials of Cyrus ruling the 120 provinces of the empire, but they were invisible beings having kingship over those provinces under the imperial prince just mentioned. That this prince must have been an appointee of Satan—exercising his own office and directing the offices of those under him in Satan's interest—is clear from the fact that he so stoutly opposed the messenger of God on his way to Daniel.

This reminds us of Eph. 6: 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high [heavenly] places." This shows that Satan has in the skies above us a vast, consummately organized empire, divided into spheres, with ranks of officials,

all engaged in ruling this world after their own manner and contrary to the kingdom of God. This realm of Satan is called "the kingdom of darkness"; and all his subordinates are called "the world-rulers of this darkness." There was the world-ruler of darkness over the Persian Empire, with kings of darkness under him ruling over the component kingdoms of the empire. There was also the mighty prince-ruler of darkness over Grecia. It suggests to our minds that governmental organizations in Satan's interest exist in the skies exactly corresponding to and interlocking with the governmental organizations of the earth.

We have already been taught in Daniel that "the heavens do rule." But we thought that it meant that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." And so it does. Although the devil has the principality in the skies over this earth, yet he is not independent of God, and he is not frustrating the ultimate purposes of God but furthering them. And this chapter of Daniel elucidates the matter somewhat. Into Satan's sphere of sky-rule God sends forth angelic invaders to contend (as did Michael the archangel with Satan himself over the body of Moses, Jude 9), to contest, to dispute, to frustrate, to baffle the counsels and the operations of Satan. We may be sure that not only the wrath of man, but also the wrath of Satan brings praise to God; and the remainder thereof, what cannot bring praise to God, God restraineth. We are taught that children have their

appointed angels, and that angels are sent forth as ministering spirits in attendance upon the heirs of salvation. On a higher scale still, angels of distinguished aspect and power are valiantly contending with Satan's mightiest ruling forces, to checkmate their shrewdest wiles and most dangerous strategies. While Satan is "deceiving the nations" right along, and causing many of them with most pious pretences to be building directly contrary to Christ and His kingdom, yet history is but the unfolding of divine prophecy and the fulfilling of the "works of God [which] are known unto Him since the foundation of the world."

Our present passage very clearly shows that these principles hold strictly good in the case of Israel, at least. What is brought to light in this Scripture pertains altogether to Daniel's people. It is evident that the prince of Persia was especially opposed to having this message delivered to Daniel; because it was a decree of God of greatest importance concerning Israel which, if once it could be delivered to and through the prophet, this prince well knew was sure to come to pass in its time. It is most interesting to see what mighty angelic beings God employs in Israel's affairs and interests, even while Israel is under God's ban.

In this connection the expressions of 10: 21 and 11: 1 are especially impressive. The angel speaks of Michael—whom he had called in verse 13 "one of the chief princes," i. e., one of God's archangels—as "Michael your prince," i. e., as the immediate heavenly prince over Israel. The

angel informs Daniel that this Michael holds with himself in "these things" relating to Daniel's people. He further adds that he himself "stood to confirm and strengthen" Michael in the first year of Darius the Mede. That is, at the time when God was overthrowing the Babylonian Empire, which held Israel with iron grasp, and was setting up the Medo-Persian Empire, which, as we have seen, was so signally to favor the Jewish exiles in their release, in their rescue from Haman's plot, and in their restoration to Statehood—there was a mighty conflict over these matters in the skies; and even the archangel Michael had such strong opposition to frustrate as to require the aid of this other mighty angel, presumably Gabriel. No doubt this partial lifting of the curtain of the aerial sphere at this time, was to prepare Daniel the better to comprehend the superintending agencies of the great historic drama which was foretokened by his last vision, and which the angel was preparing to elucidate to him. And we also are to bear these things in mind when we follow the angel's interpretation.

Before passing on, however, we may appropriately apply what we have just been considering to the momentous events of the last three years, 1914–1917. How bewitched, how deceived, how satanized, the nations of Christendom and other parts of the world are today! No wonder that hopes of universal peace, confidence in twentieth century civilization, reliance upon the maxim that the way to keep the peace is to be prepared for

war, boasting of what Christianity has done for western nations—all are scattered to the breeze, if we look no higher for inspiring causes of war than this earth and the nations themselves! The inspiring cause sits laughing in the skies. What a triumph for hell-doomed hosts of darkness!

But the very fact that history has known nothing like it in any respect proves, not only that the devil is having a red-letter day, but also that something of unusual significance is transpiring in the furtherance of God's eternal counsels. Could we but look into the skies and trace the titanic grapple of supreme forces of darkness and of light, we certainly would be looking less to puny man and commenting less upon man's prowess or his mistakes. Could we but possess the divine "clue to the maze," how much more poised and intelligent would be our prayers! But, in the light of all the revelations of Daniel thus far, we feel strongly impressed that we are in the transition from "latter days" to "last days." And we cannot fail to conclude that a struggle, which involves the whole western territory of the imperial world of Daniel—just where the Jews are at present mostly located; so that, as never before, they are having to slaughter each other without any cause excepting that warring Gentile lords compel them to do so—must have chief significance in relation to the furtherance of those final purposes of God with reference to His ancient people, which purposes this book of Daniel so wondrously unfolds.

XI

DANIEL'S LAST VISION CONTINUED

2 And now will I shew thee the truth.

WITH THESE WORDS the angel proceeds to the interpretation of the vision and opens up, first, what we have seen to be—

Part 2—Background of, or Approach to, the Vision Proper, 11: 2-35.

... Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. 3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides those.

COMING RISE OF THE GRECIAN EMPIRE.—The angel speaks from the chronological standpoint of 10: 1, “the third year of Cyrus king of Persia”—533 B. C. He introduces three succeeding Persian rulers in order to make particular mention of the fourth. This one was to be distinguished by unprecedented wealth, by means of which he was to make an imposing invasion “against the realm of Grecia.” Thereupon “a mighty king shall stand up,” evidently from

Grecia and in requital of this invasion. In his retaliatory campaign he is seen to succeed wonderfully; for he shall “rule with dominion and do according to his will.” This clearly represents that this mighty king of Grecia was to make complete, undisputed conquest of his enemy’s territory and convert it all into a Grecian Empire. But verse 4 represents him as coming to a sudden, untimely end, leaving his empire to fall into four divisions—eastern, western, southern and northern. These four were to come under rulers outside the line of the conqueror, and the empire was to be the weaker for this partition.

We recall that, by the vision of chapter 8, Daniel had already been shown that Grecia was to follow Medo-Persia as the third of the four great successive world-empires. Under this light Daniel must have understood the portion of the angel’s sketch of the future now before us as portraying the rise of the Grecian Empire. And in 10: 20 a word was dropped by the angel which should be taken account of here: “And now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.” While all that the angel may have implied by the last sentence of the quotation is not evident to us, yet this much we can see: the satanic vice-regent of the existing kingdom of Grecia and of the future Grecian Empire was already occupying that important position, and he was sufficiently busy to call for the counteracting operations of God’s angelic watchman.

From our present historical position the angel's outline of coming events is easily convertible into historical identification. The Persian rulers who were to succeed the existing ruler, Cyrus, were Cambyses (529-522), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521), and Darius Hystaspes (521-485). The fourth and fabulously rich king was Xerxes (485-465). Soon after his accession to the throne, he amassed an army of one million men, it is said, besides a navy of twelve hundred ships, with which he made a determined invasion of Greece. The famous battle of Thermopylae belongs to this epoch of history. The naval battle at Salamis—480 B. C.—resulted in decisive defeat to Xerxes, who retreated in fright and chagrin to his own country. Several Persian rulers succeeded him; but no retaliatory blow was struck against Persia for about a century and a half, when Alexander of Macedon executed the summary revenge described by the angel.

We see that the vision follows a line of logical perspective—rather than chronological—from the invasion of Greece by Xerxes to the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. Salamis really foredoomed the Persian Empire. Alexander began a lightning-like invasion of Asia at about twenty years of age. In about a dozen years he had swept all Asia to the confines of India, inflicting the final blow against Persia in 331 B. C. It is said that he wept for more kingdoms to conquer; but his career suddenly ended at less than thirty-three years of age from an excessive ca-

rouse. He left his empire in confusion, out of which during the succeeding 20 years it emerged in the four kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Chaldea and Greece, but without its former power and with none of Alexander's kin sharing the rule.

We return now from our present historical position to Daniel's position; and we will pursue the prophetic perspective, remembering that Daniel did not know the exact territories or persons which loom up in view. Neither do we, to begin with. Such knowledge was not and is not necessary as a condition of clear light. The prophecy consists as prophecy in being itself the clear revelation of coming, predetermined events. Daniel did not need to know dates or geographical and personal names; neither do we. The historical events are not the revelation or the interpretation of the prophecy; they are only its fulfilment, its identification. The historic events derive their light from the prophecy, not the prophecy from the events.

The writer takes it for granted that the reader followed the request made early in the last chapter, that Chapters 10-12 should be read through carefully in advance, to see that they fall into three parts as the writer has since designated. Accordingly the reader can readily take in what is now to be said as preliminary to the perusal of verses 5-35.

Inasmuch as the angel declared to Daniel that the purport of the vision revealed what was to befall the prophet's people in the latter days, it is

plain that Part I—consisting of 10: 4–11: 1 and constituting a mere introduction of the whole—does not belong to the vision proper; and we have called the section now under treatment, viz., Part II, the background of, or approach to, the vision proper. We did so because, upon reading the whole through, we found that this part betrays no feature of latter day times. It would not be put before us, however, excepting as it belongs integrally to the line of perspective focusing upon the latter days. The verses of this part which we have already examined clearly do not fall within the vision of latter day events. And yet, do they not fall in the line of perspective of the latter days? For it is to be remembered that we learned in chapter 8, that the four kingdoms into which the Grecian Empire was divided are to have a “latter time” of their kingdom (8: 23); and that the last great ruler and oppressor of Israel is to come forth out of one of those kingdoms in their latter time.

The further and main portion of Part II will now be taken up. It should be conclusively apparent that it does not, any more than verses 2–4, belong to the vision proper, and yet that just as clearly it falls into the line of perspective centering upon the last days.

(The *italic* type indicates the text of verses 5–35.)

5 And the king of the south—one of these four divisions of the original Grecian Empire—*shall*

be strong, and one of his princes. That is, there shall first be a powerful king over the south, who shall have also a very strong prince subordinate to him. *And he, this prince, shall be, or become, strong above him, the king of the south, and have dominion;* that is, the prince shall become the head of one of the four dominions in question, and he shall be mightier than the king of the south; *his dominion shall be a great dominion.* 6 *And in the end of years, or after some years, they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north,* (here the location of this second kingdom first appears) *to make an agreement, or political alliance, presumably through the marriage of this daughter of the southern king with the northern king; but she shall not retain the power of the arm: neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up,* presumably divorced, *and they that brought her* (very likely politicians at the king of the north's court who brought about this arrangement), *and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.* The entire piece of diplomacy on the part of the southern king in relation to his stronger rival ends in fatal disaster at all points.

7 *But out of a branch of her roots,* a fraternal line from the same father, *shall one stand up in his estate,* arise in the place of the former king of the south, *which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall pre-*

vail: 8 And shall carry captives into Egypt (here it is betrayed that the southern kingdom is Egypt) *their gods, the gods of the king of the north, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold: and he, this victorious king of Egypt, shall continue more years than the king of the north, shall outlive the reign of his rival. 9 So the king of the south, Egypt, shall come into his kingdom, i. e., shall come not only "into the fortress of the king of the north" (verse 7), but into his very kingdom, and shall return triumphantly into his own land. 10 But his sons, the sons of the king of the north, shall be stirred up, after their father's defeat and death, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one, of these sons, shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through toward Egypt: then shall he return, on a new expedition, and be stirred up to greater advance than before, even to his, the king of Egypt's, fortress, or main frontier defence.*

11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he, the king of the north, shall set forth a great multitude: but the multitude shall be given into his hand, the hand of the king of Egypt. 12 And when he hath taken away the multitude, captive, his heart shall be lifted up, with pride and recklessness; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it, all his success shall fail of permanent profit to him. 13 For

the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, one, and shall certainly come, against Egypt, after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 *And in those times there shall many stand up, in revolt, against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people, the turbulent elements of Daniel's people, the Jews, shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; they shall prove treacherous to Egypt in order to bring about their own deluding vision; but they shall fall, they shall procure their own destruction.* 15 *So the king of the north shall come, against Egypt, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities, the most strongly fortified cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.* 16 *But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, he shall invade in passing the Holy Land, which by his hand shall be consumed.* This was to be the reward for the rebellious treachery of the Jews just mentioned.

17 *He, the king of the north, shall also set his face to enter, Egypt, with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him* (Marg., "equitable conditions," i. e., with deceitful profers of fair conditions. This seems to mean that the king of the north will try his very best to get a dominant hand upon the very lever of the kingdom of Egypt by plausible overtures); *thus shall*

he do, this is the way he will try to reach his end: and he shall give him, the king of the south, the daughter of women, the chief princess of the northern kingdom, corrupting her, to effect his designs: but she shall not stand on his side, her own father's part, neither be for him. 18 *After this, having failed in his scheme just mentioned, shall he turn his face unto the isles, of the Mediterranean, in the sphere of Roman power, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf, protecting his own interests in the Mediterranean, shall cause the reproach offered by him, the invader, to cease: without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him, i. e., the western prince shall cause the invader's insult to turn against himself.* 19 *Then he, the invader, shall turn his face, in hot retreat, toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found, disappearing unaccountably.*

20 *Then shall stand up in his estate, arise in the room of the king of the north, a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: that is, the succeeding king will have heavy tribute to raise as a result of his predecessor's defeat by the western prince; and he will undertake to mulct the Holy Land for this tribute: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, assassination for his action, nor in battle, with attacking troops, but by some mysterious judgment.*

21 *And in his estate, succeeding him, shall stand up a vile person, ignoble in character and in rank, to whom they shall not give the honour of the*

kingdom, to whom they shall not give the crown by right and with public acclaim: but he shall come in peaceably, in a time of unwatchfulness and non-resistance, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. 22 *And with the arms of a flood shall they, whoever afterwards seek to thwart him, be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken: yea, also the prince of the covenant, the High Priest of the Jews.* 23 *And after the league made with him, as recognized head, he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.* 24 *He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the provinces: and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers: he shall scatter among them, the provinces through which he progresses, the prey, which he takes along his way, and spoil, and riches; i. e., he will make headway by lavish use in one province of the booty taken in another: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, he shall lay his plans to capture the strong holds of the historic rival of the south, even for a time, until a ripe time for determined attack.*

25 *And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army: and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle, with him, with a very great and mighty army: but he, the king of the south, shall not stand: for they, his trusted ones, shall forecast devices against him.* 26 *Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, the king*

of the south, *and his army*, the king of the north's, *shall overflow*: and many, of the southern army, *shall fall down slain*. 27 *And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief*, to one another, *and they shall speak lies*, to one another, at one table, of professed conference: but it shall not prosper: for yet the end, of this menace to Egypt, shall be at the time appointed, in the providence of God.

28 *Then shall he*, the king of the north, *return into his own land with great riches*: and his heart shall be against the holy covenant, the people of God's holy covenant, the Jews: and he shall do exploits, dastardly exploits against the Jews, and return to his own land. 29 *At the time appointed*, in God's purpose, *he shall return*, and come toward the south: but it shall not be, with him in success, as the former, the first campaign, or as the latter, campaign. 30 *For the ships of Chittim shall come against him*, ships from the western power of the Mediterranean: therefore he shall be grieved, chagrined and enraged, being frustrated just at the point of complete success, and return, homeward, and have indignation, vent his indignation, against the holy covenant, i. e., the people in holy covenant with God, the Jews: so shall he do: he shall even return, a second time, and have intelligence, a treacherous understanding, with them that forsake the holy covenant, the renegade Jews. 31 *And arms*, armed forces of faithless Jews, shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, of God, the Strength of Israel, and shall take away the daily

sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination of desolation that maketh desolate. This describes the suspension of the daily burnt offering at the Jewish Temple and a most outrageous defilement of the sanctuary.

32 *And such as do wickedly against the covenant,* Jews who shall defy every sanctity and loyal obligation, *shall he corrupt by flatteries,* pervert from their faith and loyalty by flatteries: *but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.* The result of this malign flatterer's doings was to create an effectual cleavage between hypocritical Jews and the real God-fearing believers who were to accomplish unparalleled achievements of faith. 33 *And they that understand among the people shall instruct many:* there shall be among the people those of deep spiritual understanding and of keen insight into God's Word for the hour—especially into this very part of Daniel—and they shall instruct many receptive inquirers: *yet they, whether teachers or taught, shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.* What a time of separating the wheat from the chaff and of winnowing the wheat! 34 *Now when they shall fall they shall be holpen with a little help:* but many shall cleave unto them with flatteries. The fires will have, therefore, to burn yet hotter. 35 *And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, "to make a purification among them"* (Leeser), to refine the believing company from every evil admixture, *and to purge,* the believers of all alloy,

and to make them white, as with fuller's soap, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. This closing part of the verse (and of the closing part of this description) may be taken, in a cursory understanding, as indicating the continuance of this baptism of fire until an appointed end. But to the writer there seems to be a deeper and truer sense, which can be conveyed by reading the words thus: to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, *with respect to the time of the end*—as prototypes of the purified remnant of the last days: because this type is yet for an appointed time, the last days.

It seems very clear that verses 5–35 trace in vision a continuous history of the rivalry between the northern and southern divisions of the quaternate empire already introduced. If so, we should find that the history of Egypt and Syria, subsequently to Alexander the Great's death, answered perfectly to this panorama. Is such the case? The parallelism is so perfect, that rationalism early assailed the authenticity of Daniel on the very ground that such a replica of the history of Egypt and Syria in relation to one another—from their first emergence as divisions of the Grecian Empire down to and including the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, about a century and an half in all—could not have been foreseen and foreshown by any mind. And the same type of rationalism, called Higher Criticism—a traitor in the very camp of the saints—audaciously and insistently dates the authorship of Daniel in the second cen-

tury B. C., and subsequent to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. But we will now reproduce this prediction from the authentic pages of its historic fulfilment.

Ptolemy Soter was the first one of Alexander's captains to gain control of a partition of the empire. He was the first "king of the south"—Egypt (vs. 5). Seleucus Nicator, "one of his princes"—who was first made prince of the province of Babylonia and then ousted from it—proved strong enough to acquire the dominion of Babylonia; from thence he stretched westward and founded for himself the great kingdom of Syria (vs. 5). These two kingdoms sought to establish an affinity (vs. 6) by means of a scandalous marriage of Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second king of Egypt, with Antiochus Theos, King of Syria, who put away Laodice his wife for this purpose. But the issue of this hideous affair was bloody and endless conflict. Berenice lost her place and was poisoned, as was also her offspring. Laodice was taken back.

A successor to the Egyptian throne, probably Ptolemy Euergetes, a brother of Berenice, invaded the northern kingdom, took the royal fortress, and prevailed everywhere, carrying away "4,000 talents of gold, 40,000 talents of silver, and 2,500 idols and idolatrous vessels" (vss. 7, 8). After this, conflict ceased for some years. An ineffectual attempt to retaliate was made by Seleucus II (vs. 9). After his death, however, one of his two

sons rose to such power and prowess as to assail successfully Egypt's fortress Gaza (vs. 10).

This at last aroused Philopator, the easy-going king of Egypt, to intense indignation (vs. 11). A momentous engagement ensued between him and Antiochus III, or the Great, with signal defeat to the latter. This decisive battle was fought near Gaza; but, because of Philopator's love of ease history says, he failed to follow up his advantage (vs. 12). After some years of conspicuous progress in the north and of decay in the south, Antiochus of Syria made another and more formidable invasion of Egypt (vs. 13). He was assisted by general revolts against Egypt (vs. 14). Here was the point where seditious Jews intermeddled. They apostatized from their obligations to Egypt and to God, revolted to the standards of Antiochus as a fine piece of policy, which, of course, would be doomed by God to failure (vs. 14).

Antiochus then successfully besieged the well fortified and stubbornly defended city of Sidon, which was Egypt's most prized northern stronghold (vs. 15). Antiochus swept on southward and was welcomed in the Holy Land; but he carried concealed in his hand the castigation of the Jews (vs. 16). The next year he renewed his conquest with increased preparation and with extra success (vs. 17); but because of Roman interference he changed his warlike purpose to one of diplomacy, and he offered his young daughter Cleopatra in marriage to the new Ptolemy, a mere

lad in years. The object of this crafty arrangement was to engage her in intrigue in favor of Syria; but she failed her father in this policy (vs. 17).

In revenge Antiochus then turned his conquests against the isles of the Mediterranean Sea (vs. 18) and seized many of them. This, however, brought vigorous resistance from Rome; an able general, Scipio Asiaticus, rebuked the indignity of Antiochus and turned it decisively back upon his impudent head (vs. 18). Antiochus fled from one fortress to another (vs. 19); but he was brought to a halt and put under heavy terms of tribute. In attempting to plunder a temple he was slain (vs. 19).

Seleucus Philopator, the successor to the throne of Syria, inherited the heavy burden of tribute, and in endeavoring to meet it he sent "an exactor" to confiscate the treasures of the Jewish temple; but he was soon mysteriously put out of the way (vs. 20). His successor was not the lawful heir, as there was a son of Seleucus Philopator; and another person, a son of Cleopatra and grandson of Antiochus the Great, was strongly supported as claimant. But, owing to intrigue and political favor, the young brother of Seleucus was accorded the throne, though without its honors (vs. 21).

This person was Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B. C.), the "contemptible" as history denominates him. "He was given up to the most degraded and unnatural passions; he was unscrupu-

lous, cruel, and of a savage temper; he delighted in the company of the lowest and basest of men, and was most uncertain in his conduct; but yet he was deficient neither in courage, nor in cunning ability." By means of allies he swept resistance from before him (vs. 22) and very early dealt his first malignant blow upon God's people by depositing the High Priest Onias, who was also murdered and succeeded by a mercenary and heathenizing High Priest, named Jason. By truce-breaking measures Antiochus advanced his strength (vs. 23), although with small resources of his own. He went on to appropriate peaceably neighboring provinces by exhibiting an unprecedented generosity in dispensing his easily-gotten riches (vs. 24). This was all to the end of reaching the strongholds of his Egyptian rival (vs. 24).

In due time Antiochus exerted a great effort to conquer Egypt (vs. 25). Although the king of the south made a most formidable resistance, yet, largely owing to the treachery of his most intimate and trusted associates, he succumbed to Antiochus (vs. 26). Ptolemy fell into the hands of Antiochus, who made politic and lying terms with him (vs. 27), which by divine appointment failed of their purpose. Returning northward laden with spoils of Egypt, Antiochus turned aside on some pretext and "assailed Jerusalem; he slew 40,000 of the inhabitants, sold as many more for slaves, and plundered the temple, carrying off treasures to the value of 1800 talents"; after which he completed his homeward journey (vs. 28). Antio-

chus later renewed his plans of conquest against Egypt (vs. 29). Although he prospered, history tells us, up to the point of arriving without hindrance within four miles of the city of Alexandria, yet disappointment awaited him; for there he was met by the admiral of a Roman fleet (vs. 30) and was compelled to retire. This was in 168 B. C. Antiochus had to bow in discouragement before the tokens of the approach of a new empire of the world, the fourth in Daniel's series. It was a century yet before the token was fulfilled and Rome became mistress of the imperial world.

In returning northward Antiochus made Jerusalem the victim of his rage and chagrin. He left there armed forces to massacre, humiliate and horrify the Jews to the utmost (vs. 31). "The king is said to have issued a decree to his whole kingdom, commanding that all his subjects should be one people, with one religion and with the same laws. And, in order to enforce this upon the Jews, their sanctuary was profaned; the offerings and sacrifices were prohibited; and an idol-altar was built over the altar of Jehovah, upon which swine's flesh was sacrificed, presumably to an image placed above the altar. This was the abomination of desolation, the signal that great wrath was upon Israel. Idol-chapels were set up in all the cities of Judea, and the inhabitants were commanded to sacrifice and to burn incense to the gods of Greece. Whoever refused, whoever was found with the Book of the Law in his possession or en-

deavoring to keep the law, was put to death without mercy."

All this caused many of the Jews to apostatize; but it was the occasion also for the rise of heroes of faith and valor never excelled in Jewish history (vs. 32). This abject degradation of Judea under Antiochus really led to a fuller liberation of the land and to a long period of greater independence than had been enjoyed since Nebuchadnezzar's first capture of Jerusalem in 606 B. C.

It came about in this wise. Mattathias, an old man of the priestly house of Asmon, contemptuously rejected splendid offers which an officer of Antiochus made to him on condition of his joining the unholy crusade. The brave patriot flew at a renegade Jew who was in the act of sacrificing on the heathen altar; he slew both the Jew and the king's commissioner, and pulled down the altar. As he fled he raised the standard of revolt with the cry, "Let all who are zealous for the Law follow me!" The deeds of this old hero and of his five sons—especially of Judas, surnamed Macabaeus—by which the Jewish commonwealth was restored until the Roman domination intervened, constitute the most heroic page of Jewish history.

Something more important, however, than these feats of daring was needed to maintain a seed of adequate vitality for the future. This was found in a class of pious and learned men, called Maskilim—the understanding ones. They were such as spiritually understood and expounded the prophets. What a light in that "dark place" must this

part of Daniel's vision have been! But these devoted teachers also brought out into fresh light the great Messianic promises; and by them they nursed a seed who should keep on waiting in fastings and prayers, like Simeon and Anna, for the coming of the greater and truer "consolation of Israel."

It is the illustrious ministry and success of these spiritual luminaries of the Maccabaean days that verses 33-35 emphasize. They are shown to be the connecting link with the latter days—"the time of the end." In Antiochus Epiphanes appeared a striking prototype of the "king of fierce countenance," whom chapter 8 predicted should come up—"in the latter time of their kingdom"—out of one of the four kingdoms of the old Grecian Empire which Antiochus tyrannized. And God's use of the last great persecutor of Israel, in sifting out the final remnant, was illustrated in the creation of the class of believers of those former days, who were purged from admixture and alloy in the fiery heat of murderous oppression, and who were forged into the finest temper on the anvil of alternate flattery and defection on the part of trusted supporters.

In the uplifting to our view of this rare company of witnesses to the faith, as the type of the remnant of Israel in the last days, we already catch sight of what this last vision was given to contribute as the final portion of the composite revelation of the whole book. As we enter upon the last section—Part III—we will have our eyes

focused, not only upon the "latter days" and "what shall befall Daniel's people in the latter days," but also and most pointedly upon a purified remnant of Israel which, by the extreme exigencies of their days, shall be prepared to enter into the inheritance of the long-promised kingdom.

XII

DANIEL'S LAST VISION CONCLUDED

IT remains for us to study

Part 3—The Vision Proper, 11: 36—12: 13.

36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

THE LAST AND SUPREME PERSECUTOR OF ISRAEL.—A cursory reading would detect no reference in verse 35 to the last days and no chronological parenthesis between verses 35 and 36. Consequently the expression, “and the king,” would be taken as an immediate continuation of the history of the king of the north, the “vile person” introduced in verse 21. But all the language following these introductory words identifies him with that final persecutor of Israel with whom we have been made so familiar in chapters 7, 8 and 9. This is why he is here introduced as one already in mind, “and the king”—the well-known king, the Anti-christ who eclipses all other antichrists. Has he not been left uppermost in mind by the three preceding visions? And did not the angel’s word, “I am come to make thee know what shall befall thy people in the latter days,” put our minds, as well

as Daniel's, on the *qui vive* for a new chapter on this abhorrent person as soon as this last vision proper should be taken up? And has not the picture of the "vile person," more and more as his portrait was unfolded in verses 21-35, projected our minds forward to his anti-type? And does not the deeper insight into the last half of verse 35 point us in perspective from the Maccabees to their anti-type, the separated, purified and saved Israelitish remnant of the last days—that remnant which had been the objective of Hebrew prophecy all the way down to Daniel?

Not only will he be a wilful king; the main point is that he shall be allowed to do according to his will. Until his time no hater, no persecutor of Israel will have been allowed by God to execute all his malignant will against Israel. Until that day no persecutor will have had the power of Satan sufficiently in his hands to be able to wreak upon Israel the whole impulse of his wicked heart. This king's assertion of himself, his self-exaltation even above all gods, his inconceivable blasphemy of Almighty God—are familiar to us already; and we cannot think of attributing the description to any but the Antichrist. But the point which is driven home right here is that he shall prosper in all this outrageous course "till the indignation be accomplished." It hardly needs to be explained again that this word "indignation" means God's fierce wrath upon Israel. The king's doings all focus upon the devoted head of God's impenitent Israel; and his doings progress

even to all “that is determined” by God in order to accomplish His end with Israel. This is the key to this vision; it means the final accomplishment of all that God purposes by His indignation against Israel. This king is but the instrument of that purpose of God.

37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 But in his estate he shall honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. 39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

These verses enlarge upon the atheistical character of the Antichrist. We need not repeat the citations of parallel New Testament passages which have been connected with previous descriptions of the Antichrist. A few peculiar expressions call for some notice. The words, “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers,” might be construed favorably to the idea that the Antichrist will be a Jew, who will lead and coerce impenitent Israelites to renounce the God of their fathers. “The desire of women” seems not unlikely to refer to Christ, the Messiah of the Jews, whom it was the pious desire of all Jewish womanhood to have the honor of bearing. “But in his estate” means in his stead, i. e., in God’s stead, or Christ’s. Although an atheist in the sense of disavowing all hitherto known gods, yet this king is shown to be a

theist nevertheless; he will have his god, one never before worshipped. The R. V. is helpful here:

But in his place shall he honor the god of fortresses: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and with pleasant things. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a strange god; whosoever acknowledgeth him he will increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price.

The meaning appears to be that this king's god is one who will give him unparalleled power and authority in the realm of all forces. Under New Testament light we see Satan in this god,—Satan, who is just waiting for the competent man who shall, on condition of worshipping him supremely and alone, receive and exercise all his power and authority before the world. See Rev. 13: 2; 2 Thess. 2: 4, 9. The last of verse 39 seems to indicate that Antichrist will set high in rule those who best meet his religious demands, and give them free rein to rule and to rob those who refuse to meet those demands, especially loyal Jews.

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

WHENCE SHALL THE ANTICHRIST ARISE?—This verse supplements Daniel 8: 9 in enabling us to answer this question. In 8: 9, 23 we learned that Antichrist is to arise from one of the

four reconstituted kingdoms of the old Grecian Empire, i. e., out of Egypt, Chaldea, Syria or Greece. But 8: 9 pictures his conquest "toward the south [Egypt], and toward the east, [Chaldea], and toward the pleasant land [Palestine]." This leaves only the north, Syria, and the west, Greece, as the geographical territory from which he must appear. But in the verse now before us (11: 40) the northern kingdom, Syria, is represented as being more hostile to his advance than either the southern or the eastern. "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships." Hence, we have only the western kingdom left, or Greece, out of which to look for Antichrist's appearing. And the last expression of the verse just quoted, "with many ships," indicates that his kingdom can be assailed from the sea as well as by land. This exactly fits the case of Greece.

We are, then, brought convincingly to the conclusion that this king, the Antichrist, will begin his public political career as the head of the kingdom of Greece in the latter days. And in 7: 24 we are told that "he shall subdue three kings." We know now what kingdoms these three will be; they will be the three other kingdoms of the old Grecian Empire—Egypt, Syria, and Chaldea. Having subdued these kingdoms, the Antichrist will evidently receive the peaceable submission of the other six of the ten kingdoms which shall constitute in the last days the Fourth, or Roman, Em-

pire. This appears not only from Daniel 7: 8, 24 but still more clearly from Rev. 17: 12, 13:

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast.

Little need be said upon verses 40-43.

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

ANTICHRIST'S CONQUEST.—The above verses evidently describe more fully than has been done before the Antichrist's subjugation of the whole territory of the old Grecian Empire, excepting "Edom, and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon." (According to Is. 11: 14, these three nations will be conquered at the return of Christ by the remnant of Israel.) Knowing as we do the bitter hatred now existing between Greek and Turk, we can easily imagine what a fierce opposition Antichrist will meet in subjugating the territories which are so strongly Moslem in population.

Of course "the glorious land," verse 41, means the Holy Land.

44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

THE LAST ROAR OF THE BEAST.—Verse 44 predicts startling tidings from the north and east which shall excite Antichrist to steps of destructive fury. All precedent leads us to understand the words, "to destroy, and utterly make away many," as referring to Israel. This is supported by verse 45, which describes the final encampment of Antichrist, where he eventually meets his doom. This encampment is shown to be in the midst of the Holy Land.

This mustering place of the Antichrist in the Holy Land is designated with geographical exactness in Rev. 16: 16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." This name is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Harmageddon; which is compounded of Har and Megiddo and means Mount Megiddo. Megiddo lies on the southern verge of the Plain of Esraelon, or the Valley of Jezreel. It is just where the international highway, passing out of the Plain of Sharon, descends from the Carmel range to the plain. But the term is commonly applied to the whole plain. This plain is where the great historic battles of the ages have

been fought, epoch-making victories have been won, fatal disasters have been encountered.

The last great onslaught upon Israel is not, however, to be made in this plain. Armageddon is not in reality the designation of any battle, least of all a battle between Gentile nations. Armageddon is the place of the mustering under Anti-christ of all nations in a common purpose to destroy Israel in her own land. Poor Israel will not be in condition to take the open field of Jezreel against this combined host; but her last retreat will be found in the Holy City. And it is there, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, that the final assault will be made. Many prophetical visions of this scene might be cited. We will insert portions from Joel and Zechariah.

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land. . . . Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.—Joel 3:1, 2, 12-14.

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall

the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.—Zech. 14: 1-3.

Thus shall the last supreme destroyer of Israel meet his end, “and none shall help him.” Who could help him “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”?

THE HOLY REMNANT OF SAVED ISRAEL.—Before taking up the text of Daniel 12, a few words upon the above caption may not be premature.

The refrain of all Hebrew prophecy is the oft-repeated prediction that God will eventually—when He shall have finished the work and purpose of judgment—have an Israel perfectly his own, to present to their Messiah as His national kingdom. The following selections from many like passages of Scripture will suffice:

In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.—Is. 4: 2-4.

Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.—Is. 60: 21.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.—Rom. 11: 26, 27.

We have already detected that the light of this last vision of Daniel converges upon the purified remnant of Israel, who shall constitute the seed that shall inherit the everlasting kingdom of the earth under their Messiah, the Most High Son of Man. This kingdom is the theme of the book of Daniel from first to last. It is the radiant gem set in the ring of the whole prophecy. The exquisite beauty of this gem is created by the composite radiance of five divinely-cut facets of latter-day truth:

1. The coming of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, to supersede all earthly rule.—Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Great Image.
2. The possession of this kingdom with Him by the Saints of Israel.—Vision of the Four Beasts.
3. The conclusive Judgment of God upon the ripened transgressions of Israel.—Vision of Ram and He-Goat.
4. The galaxy of spiritual Consummations to which the Jewish State finally succeeds.—The Seventy Weeks.

These four cluster about and converge to the capital facet:

5. The final Holy Seed of living Israelites who "shall be named the Priests of the Lord."—The Last Vision.

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

THE MARVELLOUS DELIVERANCE.—The opening words, “And at that time,” conclusively prove that 11: 36–45 belongs to the same last days to which the things of 12: 1 belong. That the simple expression, “shall Michael stand up,”—Michael the defender of Israel—embodies an event of supreme moment, can be seen from its parallel in Rev. 12: 7–9:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

This is the prelude to the trouble on earth which shall eclipse all precedent. Pre-eminently shall it be what is described in Jer. 30: 7: “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble: but he shall be saved out of it.” It is the travail which shall give birth to a nation to which even Israel never before was like, much less any other nation. “Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth bring forth in a day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children” (Is. 66: 8).

But we are told that the delivered ones include only “every one that shall be found written in the book.” Ever before, the deliverances of Israel had left a leaven unremoved which soon leavened again the whole lump. This verse shows that

this deliverance shall be only of "the holy seed." But not one grain of this precious corn shall fall to the earth.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

THE RESURRECTED ISRAELITES.—This verse serves as a further earmark of all these things. It is the time of the resurrection of "them that are Christ's at His coming." It cannot be, however, the resurrection of all saints at Christ's coming that is here denoted, but only that of the Israelitish portion, especially the Old Testament portion. This is the only construction that is germane to the connection of thought. The blessed revelation of these words to Daniel was that Israel's pious, faithful dead should behold and participate in this glorious consummation. Not that resurrected Israelites will be a part of the earthly population in the millennium, any more than resurrected Gentile believers will be. But they will arise at this time, and will have the celestial fruition of all their old-time hopes as believing Israelites.

Daniel needed this knowledge, even more emphatically and explicitly set forth than it had ever been before; his people through all the centuries after were to need it; especially in that approaching day of tribulation will they need it. And we need to realize and rejoice that the resurrection-wife of Jesus Christ will include the Old Testa-

ment saints. It is the Saviour's declaration, not only that the twelve Apostles shall sit on twelve (celestial) thrones judging the twelve tribes of restored Israel in the millennial day; but also, that "many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom," "when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God."

A bit of logical exegesis needs to be applied to verse 2. The words, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise," show that this resurrection is not to be entire as regards Israel, but fractional; even as we know that it will be partial as regards all the dead. No more can it be true that in this partial resurrection there will be two antagonistic classes. It is evident that of the two co-ordinates—"some . . . some"—the first "some" refers to those resurrected "at that time"; while the other "some" refers to those left for the second resurrection. Similarly Jesus says in John 5: 28, 29: "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." We know from Rev. 20: 5, 6 that the thousand years intervene between the two instalments of resurrection.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of

the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

THE BRIGHT PARTICULAR STARS.—Here again we are to confine ourselves to Israelitish horizon. The expression, “They that be wise,” refers here exclusively to understanding ones of Israel in that day of supreme trouble and darkness—like those children of Issachar, “which were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.” Just as the “understanding” ones of the Maccabaeon crisis, the “Maskilim,” shone out on the dark background of tribulation and apostasy in spiritual prominence and steadyng power; so, in the darker days of divine vengeance during Antichrist’s superhuman oppression of Israel, much of the credit under God for the creation and preservation of “the holy seed” of Israel will be due to the same class of pre-eminent spiritual teachers and exemplars. Their shining is not to be in some vague celestial sphere long after, but right there in that midnight hour of darkness. Many ignorant, tempted, wavering Israelites will they “turn to righteousness.” The principle of the matter avails for other times and cases, but the application of it here is to the crucial situation of Israelites in their hour of supreme testing.

So likewise verse 4 has exclusive reference to the same trying time and tested people: “Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” This was fulfilled by Daniel. That is why we have it all now; it was to be no ephemeral

prophecy. That is why Israel, now darkened in mind and inattentive to the book of Daniel, will have this most important body of prophecy intact in that day of dire need. "Many shall run to and fro." We see them! Not the "globe-trotters" of our present day. We see them—inquiring Israelites! Besieging their enlightened teachers! Running to and fro through these very pages of Daniel which we have been probably too listlessly perusing! There will be nothing listless in those inquirers. It will not then be a matter of different "theories on Daniel"; it will be a matter of Daniel alone. Their teachers will not be such as are taught on Daniel, but such as are wise in Daniel. It will be too late then to run through other books—books on prophecy but not prophetic books. If the one book—the prophecy itself—is not sufficient and self-evident, then those anxious inquirers will have to stumble on to their doom. But, thank God! the more they "run to and fro," the more "knowledge shall be increased"—saving knowledge. We might well learn from this how to increase our own real knowledge in God's Word.

5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and a

half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

DURATION OF THESE CLOSING WONDERS.— We should notice particularly, that the interview given in verses 5-7 includes Daniel only as an observer and a listener. There appeared in his vision two angels besides his visitant. The latter's position was in the air above the bosom of the Hiddekel or Tigris. The other two were seen situated one above each bank of the river. The one angel asked the other, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" Answer was made with the most solemn, authoritative asseveration (reminding us of a like scene in Rev. 20: 1-7), that it should be for the $3\frac{1}{2}$ times already familiar to Daniel but evidently not to the angels. This period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years agrees exactly in length and in purpose with the statements in 7: 25 and 9: 27. It is the time "when he [God, through the Anti-christ] shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people." This expresses the negative side of God's purpose in "these wonders." It is only an utterly powerless, helpless Israel—caught in an inextricable net and in hopeless extremity—that God can save for His kingdom. It is self-power, instead of the power of faith only, which has all along unfitted Israel for her destiny.

We read the plaint that will finally come from the lips of the remnant in that day (Is. 64: 1, 6, 8):

Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. . . . But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. . . . But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand.

God's gracious response to such melting plea is: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Is. 66: 2). His promise for those days of unsparing indignation is: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (Zeph. 3: 12). As Jesus said: "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23: 39).

Now Daniel heard the angelic conversation, but he did not comprehend the language of the answer given. The utterance was too lofty for his finite ear. But he learned what the answer was by inquiring of his visitor. We are to infer this and to close this paragraph with verse 8 (instead of taking verse 9 as giving his visitor's answer to his inquiry); because otherwise Daniel would not have been able to record the information as he does in verse 7.

9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the

wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. 13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

THE ANGEL'S PARTING MESSAGE.—The words of verse 9, “Go thy way, Daniel,” begin the angel’s parting message, as their repetition in the last verse proves. In the former verse Daniel is assured that his words shall stand till and for “the time of the end.” (The expressions used here do not signify at all that the book is left mysterious and unintelligible till the end.) How much this last chapter emphasizes the fact that this book relates to “the time of the end” in its revelation! How strongly assurance is given that its revelation is made good by divine fiat for the last days!

Verse 10 reiterates the substance of this last vision; namely, that a certain class of Israelites is to come through the fires of the final tribulation separated, renovated and tempered to kingdom-perfection, while the rest will all be forever cut off from kingdom-hope. The secret of the difference is shown to be one of the heart. The “wise” are not the “understanding” ones to begin with; they are contrasted with the “wicked.” We have seen how essential understanding will be in those days.

On that account this book of Daniel was given and is being preserved intact till those days. But there is a condition of understanding, without which condition understanding cannot be obtained: "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." The condition is the "wisdom" which consists in "the fear of the Lord." For lack of this wisdom the wicked "shall be driven to darkness" (Is. 8: 22). "They shall do wickedly." The tribulation fires which will melt the wise-hearted will only harden the foolish-hearted. Like Pharoah of old, their hearts will be hardened unto irreparable judgment. These incorrigible Jews will belong to the class spoken of in Rev. 9: 20, 21:

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

In verses 11, 12 two new measurements are introduced as a kind of uninterpreted appendix to the revelation. Already we have had a special measurement extending from the taking away of the daily burnt offering and the trampling down of the sanctuary to the cleansing of the sanctuary. That special measurement overlaps the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years by 1,040 days, or 2 years, 10 months and 20 days. In verse 11 a special measurement is made from

the same starting-point, only this measurement is 1,290 days—an overlap of 30 days beyond the 3½ years. No indication, however, is given of what event is then to be reached. It is idle, therefore, for us to speculate upon the matter, unless we should merely consider that it has some reference, like the former, to the sanctuary. As Jesus, on the night of His betrayal, pointed His disciples beyond His resurrection to a special meeting with them in Galilee (Matt. 26: 32), so it is easy to conceive that there will be some very special occasions awaiting the happy saints of Israel a little subsequently to the great deliverance itself. Another special measurement of 45 days' greater length, reckoning from that great base-line—the threshold of the last half of the seven years—is given in verse 12. Here it is indicated that a special blessedness awaits him who intently waits for whatever this date, this overlap of 75 days, has in store for him.

And now in the last verse, the angel in taking leave of Daniel graciously calls him to a consciousness of his own interest in the outcome of these last great things. "Go thou thy way" sounds like a discharge of Daniel from life's service. Daniel might well have anticipated the angel by saying to God, "Now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace." But it is a discharge only "till the end be." Till then, but till then only, Daniel should be at rest. The glorious revelation is made to him that "thou . . . shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Daniel's

glorified activity in relation to that coming kingdom, which is the burden of this book, is to be promptly taken up "at the end of the days." Even so shall every saint and servant of Jesus Christ enter at that day, upon a glorified plane, into "the things done in the body" upon the mortal plane.

A CLOSING WORD is offered to readers who may be disappointed at finding our exposition of Daniel rigidly confined to Israelitish application. To put into Scripture any sense that is not there profits nothing; the actual meaning alone can afford true knowledge, joy and strength. Daniel wrote with clear understanding and to convey the same. Hence, the book calls for no outside light or interpretation. All light must be found in the book itself, and its meaning must be self-evident. Then, not only is our richest gain with respect to foreknowledge of these notable coming events to be found in taking the predictions of them in their actual sense, but also our richest benefit from the events themselves is to be realized through their fulfilment exactly as predicted. For, thank God! we are vitally interested with Christ in all these predicted events. But, would we not experience a painful disgust with ourselves, in the day when the glorified saints shall participate with Christ in these marvellous fulfilments, should we find that we had affected to be wiser than Daniel himself, and to be able to explain what he failed to make plain?

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